

Grunia Slutzky-Kohn

Memories of War

Montreal
2018

**I dedicate the book *Memories of War*
to the memory of my husband, Nuchem Kohn z''l ,
the orderly of the legendary intelligence agent
Nikolai Kuznetsov.**

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Poet-writer Grunia Slutzky-Kohn

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Grunia Slutzky-Kohn

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Memories of War

Life, you are beautiful. Early summer, clear blue sky, golden sun. All around birds are singing, flowers blossoming, such beauty. I am young, beautiful, my whole life lies ahead – dreams, dreams, dreams. I will go study, I will become a doctor, I will find you a cure, mom. And suddenly – war.

I did not have time to enjoy either the spring or the summer, or the sun's golden rays, or the beauty that surrounded me. I did not have time to experience the joy and happiness of first love. War took everything from me, deprived me of that one spring of love, the golden summer sun and the smell of flowers. I loved flowers so much, planted them myself, tended to them, but I did not get to see them blossom. My whole life was broken and cut short in one day. I lost everyone and found myself alone.

*Cherish peace! Enjoy life, young ones!
Don't complain and don't waste one minute!
Appreciate life!
Life is beautiful, but it is not eternal.
Youth passes quickly, just like spring.
There is nothing more terrible than war.*

June 1941. Summer came, it got warm. Such beauty all around: everything blossoming, singing, rejoicing. Music playing in the park. Young people walk around, have fun, unaware of what awaits them. Many high school graduates are preparing to apply to colleges: some to the medical college, others to colleges of law, industry or pedagogy. All paths are open to the young.

Suddenly – war, our cities' being bombed. The Germans have crossed the border and are moving forward (in fact, they were Austrians; the 4th Austrian Division was renamed the 45th Division of the Wehrmacht). They burn and pillage everything in their path. There is a big commotion. Nobody knows where to run, how to escape. Women are running away to the East with their children. Crowds of

people are moving along the road in dismay, escaping the vicious enemy. Mobilization begins quickly: Motherland is in danger, calling on her people to defend the native soil!

Young boys who had just finished tenth grade grew up quickly. They put on soldiers' overcoats and left for the front lines as volunteers. Our boys forgot all about college. There was only one slogan: "Everything for the front! Everything for Victory!" Just yesterday I was walking with you, and you confessed your love to me. No one in the whole world was happier than I, and you were happy too. I could not have thought that the war would begin the next day, and that you would bid me farewell forever. That your friends and you, boys of eighteen, would leave for the frontlines as volunteers, and that in the very first days of war you would lay down your young heads while defending the Motherland.

Such patriotism! Such heroism was shown by our young people in the first days of war, as they defended Belarus, their Motherland! The enemy is strong. Our dear husbands, sons and brothers perish. Old women weep as they watch crowds of people on the road: "Who are you leaving us with? Good people, what will now become of us?" All around, everything is in flames; the enemy is bombing cities and roads, sparing no one. A horrible sight. In just a few days, enemies have turned our people's lives to hell. Nobody knows how long we have to stay in this hell. The summer was hot; it was in its full force. In the first days of war, Belarus suffered more than anyone. Fierce battles were fought near Grodno. The city was occupied on June 22, 1941, on the very first day of war. The fortress of Brest heroically resisted the enemy for seven days, from June 22 to June 29, 1941. Germans began by shooting all Communists and Jews. Their first victim was Yefim Fomin, a regiment commissar. The town of Bobruisk changed hands several times between the Soviet soldiers and the enemy; there was heavy fighting near the river Berezina. During that time, many people escaped and got as far as Krichev, where they began to evacuate civilians.

On June 28, 1941, Bobruisk was taken by the Germans. Vitebsk, Mark Chagall's hometown, was occupied on July 11, 1941. During its retreat, the Red Army set part of the city on fire. Another part of the old city burned down during the fighting. Many did not have time to evacuate; they tried to leave on foot but had to turn back. German tanks caught up with them, their aviation was incessantly bombing not only cities but roads as well, people were perishing. By the Western Dvina river, near Vitebsk, the Germans' successful advance was brought to a halt for an entire week. Factories and part of the population were evacuated to the East, but not everyone could be evacuated due to the lack of transport.

On July 25, the fascists issued an order for all Jews to move into the ghetto in two days. Almost all of them died. The residents of Vitebsk did not help the fascists in the extermination of Jews; fascist propaganda did not work. Underground organizations in Vitebsk had support from the partisans. They continued to fight heroically against the fascists even after the city was occupied. On June 28, 1941, German tanks invaded Minsk. By early September 1941, the whole territory of Belarus was occupied by the German fascists: Minsk, Pinsk, Mogilev, Orsha, Polotsk, Molodechno, Volkovysk, Slutsk, Baranovichi. Hitler's soldiers set up over 260 death camps on the territory of Belarus. The biggest ones were set up in Minsk and its surroundings: a total of 20,000 Jews were killed on the Shirokaya street in Minsk, about 80,000 in the Nemiga district, over 88,000 near Lesnaya station of the Baranovichi district, over 200,000 at Maly Trostenets, 150,000 in Vitebsk, 150,000 in the Polotsk region, 100,000 in Gomel, 80,000 near the village of Masyukovschina, over 70,000 in Mogilev, 60,000 in Pinsk, 33,000 in Borisov, 22,000 in Koldychevo. There were large death camps in Molodechno, Brest, Volkovysk, Bobruisk and in other districts. During the war, over 2,200,000 civilians and war prisoners were massacred in Belarus by the fascists, and about 380,000 people were deported to Germany for forced labor. A total of 209 cities and district centres, as well as 9,200 villages, were burned down and left in ruins. Over 140

punitive operations were carried out. Over 5,295 settlements and all electrical stations were destroyed. 2,800,000 heads of cattle expropriated. Over 200 libraries and 26 museums destroyed. People of 25 nationalities of the USSR and about 4,000 anti-fascists from foreign countries joined in the fighting against the occupants in Belarus. Partisan squads were functioning from the first days of the invasion. During the occupation of Belarus, a total of 1,255 partisan squads were created, and a total of 374,000 partisans fought the enemy in Belarus. Over 140,000 Belarusian partisans and underground workers were rewarded with orders and medals for courage and heroism demonstrated in the fighting with German fascists. Eighty-eight of them received the title of the Hero of the Soviet Union. Belarus was finally liberated on August 29, 1944, during a successful Red Army operation with the codename Bagration.

On June 26, 1944, Vitebsk was liberated. Not one Jew was found there. The number of Jews who died in Vitebsk during the war is unknown. There were many refugees from Poland and other cities and towns. Grodno was liberated on July 16, 1944. According to my countrywomen who survived the Auschwitz concentration camp and whom I met by accident in Miami fifty-five years later, almost no one in Grodno was spared. A few boys came back from the army, some survived in partisan squads. My neighbour, a handsome young man, escaped into the forests near Grodno with his girlfriend, fought in a partisan squad and died in combat a day before Grodno was liberated. His girlfriend survived, later got married, but remembered him all her life. He had been wounded and died in her arms. After the war, those who survived did not find any of their relatives and scattered around the world. In June 2011, Felix Zandman, who was from Grodno, passed away. He came from a rich family. In 1943, his whole family perished in the liquidation of the Grodno ghetto. He and his uncle, as well as three others, were saved by a poor peasant woman, Anna Pukhalskaya, and her husband. The Pukhalskys hid them in a pit in the Lososna village (a cottage town in the woods near Grodno). Felix and his uncle had no money. Only one of the other guys had money, and he gave the money to Anna Pukhalskaya for

groceries. No one knew how long they would have to hide in the pit. Felix had initially asked Anna to let him hide there for one night, but she told him that she would not let him go and that she would hide him as long as it was needed. He knew the three older Pukhalsky children well, having played with them when they came to their dacha in Lososna as kids. He did not know the two younger children. Anna told Felix a story that his grandmother never told anybody.

“When I was pregnant, my husband came home very drunk and chased me out of the house in winter. I had nowhere to go. I decided to come to your granny and told her everything. She gave me a separate room, and I lived there until I went into labor. Your granny arranged for me to be admitted into a Jewish hospital, which is where I gave birth to my first daughter. She helped me for a long time after that. It was God Himself who sent you, so I could now save you.” It was not only him that she saved. His uncle came right after him, and then she saved three more people in a hole that Felix’s uncle dug under her bedroom, with the help of his friend and Anna’s husband. They hid in this hole for almost a year and a half. They could not even turn around inside it, but could only switch places. In the dark, Felix’s uncle taught him mathematics and physics. After the war, they left for Paris. Felix graduated from the University of Sorbonne in Paris, became a great scientist, opened his own company, Vishay Intertechnology Inc., which he named after his grandmother. He got the grandson of his saviors a job in the company. Its factories now employ 15,000-18,000 people. In 1995, Felix wrote the book *Never The Last Journey* about the experience he had lived through, and sent it to me. If I am not mistaken, this book was also adapted into a film.

He liked my poems; we wrote letters to each other. I am one of the last people in my generation that survived the terrible tragedy in Grodno.

Nothing Is More Terrible Than War!

*You swore to me, darling, of your love,
Promised that we would get married after the war.
Wait for me, sweetheart, wait!
I will soon come back from the war.
Many years I waited for you,
Summer and autumn went by, winter came,
And I still waited, and waited, and waited.
Finally, Victory Day arrived,
All dressed up, I waited for you.
Relatives gathered, all friends came over,
But you did not come back to me from the war,
You did not keep your word, my beloved.
War tore us apart forever,
Deprived me of joy and happiness.
Cruel you are, war!
Oh sorrow, my sorrow,
Pain does not cease in my soul,
Tears run and run,
And your love bids farewell to me.
Nothing is more terrible than war!*

Childhood cannot be forgotten, and the first days of war have stayed in my memory as though it happened yesterday. Here I am leaving my native lands in a haste, escaping the bombings together with my countrywomen, young girls from Grodno. The pine forests of Belarus looked on with sorrow as crowds of people took to the road. These forests had waited for children to come to summer camps, enjoyed children's songs in the summer, rewarded kids for their singing with blackberries, wild strawberries, sweet raspberries that children loved so much. Grown-ups also picked berries and mushrooms in the summer: porcini mushrooms, saffron milk caps, slippery jacks, dark ceps, chanterelles, red-capped scaber stalks, rollrim milkcaps, dotted-stem boletes, birch boletes that are so plentiful in Belarusian forests. Up to 400 kinds of mushrooms can be found in these forests.

On weekends in the summer, I loved to go to the woods with my mom, visit my cousins in the summer camp, pick berries and mushrooms with them, and sing songs, and wander in the woods. Mom would always check my mushrooms and teach me which mushrooms were edible, so that I didn't pick toadstools. In the evening she would fry up the fresh mushrooms with a bit of onion and some potatoes. It was just so yummy! I still think about that. We would return home with baskets full of mushrooms and berries. Mom would buy cheap strawberries and cherries in season and make jam for the winter. She left a bit of jam for me to enjoy in the copper bowl she used every year to make jam. Nobody used to buy jam; all summer women worked on preparing preserves for the winter. And in winter they would pack bread and jam for children to take to school, and they would treat guests to tea and jam. The taste of home made preserves is truly special.

And how delicious were potatoes in Belarus: *bulbas*, as we called them. Potatoes were mealy, and there were many sorts - white, red, rareripe - I no longer remember all the sorts. This was our basic daily food. Women would come up with all kinds of dishes featuring potatoes: fried potatoes, boiled potatoes, whole potatoes, jacket potatoes, mashed potatoes, potato pancakes, potato cutlets, potato soup with fried onion, potato *babka* on weekends and holidays. Women were good housekeepers and taught girls to keep house from early childhood. Many baked their own bread, especially in villages and shtetls. For holidays and weekends, Mom baked buns and pies herself. Women weren't as spoiled as they are now, nobody went to restaurants, we lived very modestly, in concord, we were content with everything and shared everything with relatives and neighbours. We pickled cucumbers and cabbage ourselves as well. As for potatoes, we prepared them for the winter and stored them in the cellar. People were happy if they could make preserves for the winter. Having limited means, housekeepers strived to feed the whole family and still share with poor neighbours. We lived in such concord, I miss it so much. Nowadays people live in big houses, comfortable apartments with all the facilities and don't even know the names of their neighbours across the

hallway. By now I am used to it, but at first it was all so strange.

In 1947, during the summer break at college, I borrowed a hundred rubles (in the old format) from a countrywoman and decided to go to my homeland, in order to see with my own eyes whether everyone had really died. I still couldn't believe it. It was a difficult time, we were still receiving bread cards, I had no help from anyone. I stayed with a former neighbour who had returned from the army and lived with a cousin, a former partisan, in a small room with no facilities. There were no available apartments in Grodno, the city was still in ruins. They gave me their old iron bed and themselves slept on the floor at their friends' house. In the morning they boiled potatoes in a pot. Sender ran to the market, bought green, unripe apples and said: "This is everything I could find." "Thank you, I could not have hoped for such a feast." After breakfast, I decided to go see the house where I was born, where I passed my childhood. "You have no business going there. There is nothing there." I insisted, promised that I would keep myself together. And so there we are, walking along destroyed streets where my friends and girlfriends used to live. Unfamiliar faces, only a few people around, the city seems dead.

We approach the Neman, and here is the street where I used to live. There are almost no houses. In place of our house there is a vegetable garden. Our former neighbour is out gathering cucumbers, tomatoes. She doesn't even look my way. And that's when I could no longer stand the pain, I moaned and my eyes went dark and I fell on my land - the land of my ancestors, my loved ones - and lost consciousness. I don't know how long I spent unconscious on my land, that was now the garden of my former Polish neighbour. I awoke and saw a police officer. "What happened?" asked the police officer. My guide responded in my stead: "This used to be her house, she was born here. She came here and didn't find anyone - just somebody else's garden. So she couldn't take it because of the pain." The police officer turned around and left, he had nothing to console me with. The river Neman looked at me and recognized me: "Greetings to you! You used to draw water here, you swam here on hot summer days and

you sang beautiful songs to me. I haven't forgotten." "Thank you. Today I cannot sing; I remember my relatives, friends. I found no one here, and there is no home, and everything here is strange to me. I must bid farewell to you, Neman, and to you, quiet grass, where I spent my happy childhood. I will carry with me your freshness and the joy of childhood years and everything that is past. Every little rock next to you is dear to me, and the quiet grass, where I rested, exhausted after running around, and all the little children of the neighbourhood there next to me. There are no more children here, such silence! Such weariness!" "It's been a long time since I heard children's songs, and I am sad", complained the river. This is how I bid farewell to childhood. My guide begged me to stay, he had spoken with the director of the pedagogical college who agreed to admit me. I said no. Thank you, I cannot stay here, my soul aches. Three days later I left Grodno, I hadn't even found the graves of my relatives. Everyone was swept away in smoke and ash. No relatives, no dear ones are left in Grodno, I was left alone with the pain in my soul until my death.

War, war, you have driven me out of my own home, you deprived me of my Motherland and everyone that I loved so much. Farewell, Belarus! Sorrow for you remains in my soul. Sincerely I loved you: your pine forests, your *bulba* potatoes, the rye bread that you have raised me on, the simple folk, and everything around me. I knew of nothing better and was happy to be in the circle of loved ones, friends. Cruel war, it was happiness that you took from me. This is how, with pain in my heart, I bid farewell to the beloved town of my childhood and returned to the Urals. There is nothing more terrible than war. How many brides did not get to see their grooms again and had no time to put on wedding dresses? How many grooms went into their graves and did not live to lead their brides down the aisle? How many wedding rings never adorned the fingers of loved ones? How many mothers did not see their sons again? Many orphans were left. How many innocent victims you fascists have driven into the grave, no one will ever know. God alone keeps the count of victims. I have seen many cripples, legless young boys, moving around on planks crudely attached to wheels. And at college I studied

with young boys who had one arm, or arms cut off up to the elbow. They would hold the pen in their teeth, and that is how they wrote. Some had an elbow that was cut in two and looked like two fingers, so they could hold a cigarette and smoke it, and they would ask someone else to light a match. One guy like that studied in the history department, although he had dreamed of becoming a doctor. At twenty he lost his arms. My soul ached for these boys.

Twenty-five years passed from the time I visited my native town Grodno after the war, in 1947. During that time, I graduated from the Sverdlov College of Foreign Languages, married a former partisan Nuchem Kohn, moved from Sverdlovsk to Rovno, Ukraine, where my husband lived after the war along with many former partisans from D. N. Medvedev's squad (Kohn didn't like the Urals), became a mother of two daughters. I told my eldest daughter much about the city, where I was born, the school where I studied, that there was a beautiful park near the school and that there was a zoo in Grodno. "When I was your age, our teacher took the class to the zoo. I stood close to the monkey cage. One monkey liked my red beret. It reached its paw through the cage, quickly snatched the red beret off my head, put it on its head and jumped with joy, humming something. All the children laughed, only to me it was no laughing matter. "Give me back my beret!" I shouted to the monkey. The monkey was not planning to return it to me. The teacher called a zookeeper, told him what happened and asked for help. With gestures, he ordered the monkey to return the beret. The monkey didn't listen to him either. So he had to climb into the cage and forcibly snatch my beret from the monkey's head. "Don't come close to the monkey cage!" he warned the whole class.

My daughter really wanted to visit the city of Grodno that I told her so much about. During the summer holidays of 1963, she begged me to go to Grodno with her for a couple of days and show her the city of my childhood. She was only eight years old. We travelled for a very long time, with a layover in Baranovichy. In Baranovichy we waited for eighteen hours for the next train. We arrived in Grodno after lunch, exhausted. I immediately went to a hotel near the Neman and

asked for a standard room for three days. The receptionist declared: no vacancies! I tried to explain to her: "I was born here, I brought my daughter here to show her the city of my childhood, she begged me so. Do you want the weak, exhausted child to sleep on the street? I will write about this to all the newspapers: how you treated a compatriot with an eight-year-old child. I would like to speak to the hotel director." The young receptionist ran to get the supervisor and came back in a few minutes. "There is a vacant VIP room. Someone booked it and didn't come." "I can't afford a VIP room." Nearby stood a middle-aged woman, she was also refused lodging. She offered me to split the costs and let her sleep for three days in the same room with us. I had to agree. There was room for all three. My daughter slept with me, she didn't want to sleep alone. Everything was fine. For the first time in my life I got to sleep in a VIP room.

The next day, I took my daughter to show her the street where I used to live. Our house was long gone. The vegetable garden was still there. "This is where our house and my relatives were before the war. We got along very well. But we have no relatives anymore, the fascists killed everyone. I told you about this before we came here." I took her to the river Neman where I used to swim with my mom. "In the summer it used to be a lot of fun here. We, children, played here and built houses, whole palaces, out of sand. We played different games, and at night I bathed here with my mom and swam on her back. I would hug her with my arms, press myself against her and there was no one in the world happier than I. I didn't know how to swim, I almost drowned twice, and mom didn't allow me to go swimming alone.

"Now I will show you the school where I studied, and sang in the choir, and danced folk dances, always standing in the first pair. As a child I loved to dance, sing and read fairy tales. Mom taught me to read at four. And here is the park, mom and I used to walk here." The park is beautiful, there are lots of flowers. My daughter liked the park. "Rest a bit, have a snack, and let's go to the zoo. There are many different birds and different animals. You'll see for yourself.

There is no zoo in Rovno, there is an old zoo *in* Grodno. So there you go, I have shown you the city of my youth. It's a pity I couldn't introduce you to my relatives. They were kind, they loved me and they would have loved you. I told you about them." I tried to keep myself together, so as not to cry and upset the child. Her reactions to everything already were beyond her years.

My city was orphaned. I did not see the former neighbor again, I did not meet anyone I knew. There were unfamiliar faces all around, all of them strangers, and I became a stranger. I bought some Grodno buns for my daughter, they are different from the ones in Rovno. For myself I bought black rye bread. I thanked the receptionist for the spot in the hotel, paid the bill and bid farewell to the city of my childhood forever. Seventy years passed after all the horrors of war, and everything is forgotten. There is fighting again: now here, now there. Islam wants to conquer the whole world. Sinful people, why do you keep silent? Do not let war happen again! This one will be more terrible than the Second World War. Now it will be atomic war. Think of your children, grandchildren. Save the young generation, our future. The world is so beautiful. Enjoy its beauty! Save the world from the threat of the new war! May God help you!

Grodno

The city of Grodno is situated by the river Neman in Western Belarus, surrounded by pine forests that are full of different mushrooms and berries. In the summer, outside the city, in the villages of Lososna and Pyshki, there were summer camps for children. The forest waited for children all year. In the summer it rewarded them for their singing with fresh strawberries, sweet raspberries and blackberries. So I was born in this quiet, beautiful city overlooking the Neman, in Devils Lane, as our street was known. I played with children by the river Neman, went to school, watched in the evenings through the open doors how people danced in all the three clubs near the river. The music could be heard from far away. "Why is our street called "Devils Lane?" I asked my mom. "It's because at night the devils come out of the river and take away children, who don't like to sleep", mom explained to me. In childhood, I was in fact afraid of the devils, and at night hid under the blanket, putting it over my head. There was a brewery on our street, where our neighbour Stasik worked, himself fatter than a beer barrel. I used to rack my brain: how many beer bottles does Stasik drink in one day? God forbid his stomach explode and flood all of Devils Lane with beer. His mother was very fat as well. Whether she drank as much beer as her son did, I cannot tell you. The daughter, Zosya, was my mom's age, she spoke the Yiddish language better than me. Twenty times a day she would come to my mom with her fairy tales. Her younger sister, Yanka, collaborated with the Germans. After the war I came to confirm whether it was true that all my relatives died. She did not greet me, could not look me in the eye. Her elder sister invited me into the house. "You grew up so much, became a real young lady, come in!" I did not come in. Through the open door I saw our neighbour's violin on their kitchen wall, and I was afraid that I would see something from our own house. Stasik died young. I haven't found any relatives, friends, or acquaintances. Everything is gone, disappeared far, far away... The city of Grodno was liberated from German fascists on July 16, 1944.

In just over three years, fascists destroyed the whole Jewish population of the city and shtetls around Grodno in the death camps of Auschwitz and Majdanek. Many were shot on the spot immediately upon occupation, 45,000, no one was spared. For centuries my grandfathers and great-grandfathers lived, worked and raised their children in Belarus. Locals did not participate in the murder of their neighbours during the German occupation, some risked their lives to save Jews. I cannot forget you, Belarus. All memories of my childhood are dear to me, and your forests, and the deep river Neman, where in the summer it was so much fun and music resounded late into the night, and your potatoes, our daily food - I haven't found such potatoes anywhere else - and the village bread: rye, round, warm, straight out of the oven, baked by the wife of mom's older brother. And how tasty was the cottage cheese in Belarus, mom's pickles, cabbage, all our simple food that we used to eat all together with great appetite. I would not trade that for anything. Only memories are left...

Summer Flew By Quickly

*Summer, you flew by so quickly,
Sweet sun, you did not warm me.
I waited for you so long, but you yielded
To clouds, rain and cold wind.
Sky, you were too grey,
Unreachable, you turned to stone,
And I can't understand what upset you.
You did not want to look upon this world.
And, sweet sun, I took on your sadness,
Your sorrow, your unease,
And this world became unbearable to me.
I cannot come to peace with people's malice.
It is not in my power, oh no!
Why did they cause me such
Undeserved pain? I don't know.
I sought a little warmth from you, sweet sun,
And didn't find it. You were rushing more than ever.
Summer flew by quickly, autumn came –*

*The rainy season. I begged you so much:
Sweet sun, wait up, don't rush by!
But you disappeared so fast, flew away,
You did not warm me.
And the pain wouldn't cease, it pushed and crushed me,
You did not ease my suffering, sweet sun.
I worked so hard, I struggled, I dreamed,
Kind people helped me in everything.
But there are also bad, envious people in the world.
God protect us from such friends.
My dream did not come true –
Such disappointment, such pain!
I forgive you, sweet sun,
I don't want to lose good friends.
Warm me sometimes,
I don't ask for much,
One of your rays will be enough
And I will know that you remember me,
That you did not forget. It is so hard to lose friends!
With you, sweet sun, I am more cheerful.
I wait for you, and I will wait
Until my last day.*

October 10, 2015, at night

Memorial Day

November 11 is Memorial Day in Canada. Canadian war veterans gather by the monument of those who fell in the fight for peace and freedom, in order to honour their memory and lay down wreaths. Representatives of the Montreal organization of Russian-speaking veterans of World War II also attend the memorial ceremony. They also lay down wreaths and remember their comrades who perished for peace and freedom on earth.

Friends!
Give your hands to each other!
Let there be peace on the whole earth!
Привет тебе! [Privet tebe!]
Bonjour!
Hello!
שלום! [Shalom!]
And we will dedicate songs to peace,
And will sing them together: you and I,
And all the children of our planet
Will sing with us:
“We don’t want war!”
Everyone suffered so much, the old and the young,
Lost family and loved ones.
So many orphans were left, so many widows.
Again blood is spilling –
Terror rages again.
We don’t want war!
Let our children grow up in peace!
We stand for peace on the whole planet!
We don’t want war!
Today is Memorial Day,
Day of mourning, day of sorrow.
Our grandmothers and our mothers weep:
We don’t want war!
Greetings to you, world!
We want to live in peace,
And sing, joke, laugh,
Love and enjoy life.
We don’t want war!
Bonjour!
Hello!
Привет! [Privet!]
שלום! [Shalom!]

November 11, 2015

Aleksandr Filyuk's Memories

In the thick forests of Polesye, nineteen kilometers away from Tsuman, there were two villages: Sofievka and Ignatovka. They were notable for being populated exclusively by Jews. The overwhelming majority of them worked the land. When war began in June 1941, young boys from these villages were conscripted into the army. The rest stayed put and didn't get evacuated. The fascists immediately started to implement their ways. Sofievka and Ignatovka were declared Jewish ghettos. In the autumn of 1941, fascists began their first major "operation". At night the Germans surrounded these villages and at dawn announced that the population was being relocated to work on road repairs. Over 2,000 Jews were rounded up in the square. The Germans started driving them towards the ditches prepared in advance, where they were to be shot.

Young people figured out where they were being taken. Many took off to escape into the forest, others followed. Some perished from the shots fired by the Gendarmes and the Polizei, but the "operation" was not successful. Later, all the inhabitants of Sofievka and Ignatovka received a notice that they had to appear at the Judenrat to be registered for employment. Those who showed up were loaded into trucks, taken to those same ditches, and shot. The remaining Jews were shot in the spring of 1942. Their property was looted. Sofievka and Ignatovka ceased to exist.

Nuchem Kohn, with his group of eighteen people, tried for a long time to get in contact with the partisans. Finally, he met A. Filyuk in the woods. "I was told that one Jewish guy is looking for me and wishes to meet me. I agreed. He told me about himself, about his group and asked me to meet with his group. I explained to them that only those who are armed can join the partisan squad. I liked the leader of that group, a strong and energetic guy, with shining eyes and a weathered face, Kohn. I admitted him into my squad. Immediately I gave him his first task: to acquire weapons hidden in the police station courtyard in the Sofievka village. During their retreat, the Red Army soldiers buried arms and ammunition there

due to the lack of transport. A fourteen-year-old boy from my squad had seen where they buried the weapons.”

It was a difficult task. Nearby, in a big house, there was a post of the Polizei, under the leadership of a German Wachtmeister. The house was guarded day and night by two Polizei. Some of the weapons were hidden in the attic, in the straw bundles used for the roof. These were the weapons that I commanded Kohn to acquire. Three people were sent on this operation: Kohn, his countryman Kazik Klein, and the guide, the young boy.

In the dark of the night they made it through vegetable plots to the garden surrounding the house. Kohn climbed up the stairs to the attic, dug through a lot of straw piles, but only found eight bayonets. There were no rifles there. Afterwards they tried digging in the dark in a number of spots pointed out by the guide, but didn't find anything. Finally, in one spot they dug up some cartridges. The guide let out a shout of joy. Immediately, there was a flare of flashlights from the two Polizei who were guarding the house, and a command was sounded: “Stop! Hands up!” Everyone took off running. In the dark, Kohn tripped and fell. The Polizei caught him and dragged him into the yard, hit him with their fists, boots, rifle butts. Covered in blood, unconscious, Kohn was dragged to the Wachtmeister of the Gendarmerie. The Wachtmeister ordered him put in jail and brought in the next morning for questioning. Two Polizei led Kohn, beaten and barely alive, to lock him up, but forgot to bring a key for the lock. One Polizei went to get the key, the other stayed to watch over Kohn and stood there smoking. He placed his rifle between his legs. At that moment, Kohn returned to consciousness, and he took advantage of that. With his last bit of strength, he punched the Polizei in the chin. The Polizei hit his head on the door and fell. Kohn quickly grabbed his rifle and started running towards the woods, but immediately fell down. Because of the beatings, he had no strength to run. On all fours, he reached the first house, where the door was wide open, climbed into the house and descended into the cellar, removing the ladder from

inside the cellar, so that they couldn't climb in there. This is what saved him.

A few minutes later, all the Polizei were rushing to look for him; they entered that house, looked for him, didn't find him, and they rushed into the forest, there were shouts, shots, then everything went quiet – they didn't find him. For another 24 hours Kohn sat immobile in the cellar. Only on the following night did he climb out of the cellar, came to me and in a weak voice reported: "Mission accomplished, Comrade Commander", and proudly showed me his rifle. Kohn's whole face was covered in enormous bruises and wounds from the beatings, and his legs were one solid black abrasion from shin to hip, from being kicked with boots, but Kohn's eyes were shining brightly on his swollen and bloody face. I firmly shook the hand of that courageous fellow and congratulated him on his baptism by fire. Kohn's disfigured face lit up, and from the corner of his lips fell another drop of blood that ran down to the large bloodstains on his shirt.

In December, we made several nighttime visits to one Gestapo agent in the Korosten village, but we couldn't catch him. He had many victims on his conscience. The last time, we arrived at dawn. According to all our intelligence, the traitor was supposed to be at home. We searched the house, the shed – to no avail. I sent Kohn to check the attic. Several minutes later, shots were fired in the attic. We climbed up to the attic, disarmed the traitor and rushed to Kohn. He was lying unconscious, severely wounded. We took him to the farm of a poor man with a large family and left him there to get better. I visited him several times, brought groceries. Kohn was recovering slowly, we had no medicine, the penetrating wound in his groin was not healing, everything was festering. Circumstances forced me to leave for Belarus, and when I came back in the summer of 1943, the farm where I left Kohn was burned down, we couldn't find out what happened. But Kohn did not die. He left the farm in time. With an unhealed wound, he managed to reach the squad of Colonel Medvedev, where he fought until Polesye was liberated from the occupants.

Memories of a Partisan's Wife

My husband, Metek, the former partisan of the special squad of D. N. Medvedev, and I were introduced by my countrywoman, when I visited her in Rovno in 1949. Immediately after the war, she married a Rovno man and left with him for Rovno. All her relatives died in Grodno, just like mine. She was very lonely, wanted to have someone close, so she invited me to visit her and introduced me to a former partisan. I didn't want to meet anyone. With only a few days left before my departure, I needed to sort everything out with my student card. I had no time for new acquaintances, besides, I had several serious admirers in Sverdlovsk. But you cannot escape fate. That evening my countrywoman and her husband convinced me to go for a walk with them, and the meeting happened. I did not know that all of this was planned beforehand. In the dark I didn't even see to whom I was being introduced. The city of Rovno was still in ruins, badly lit, the power station was under construction. I didn't want to meet anyone, I needed to stand in the student line to get a ticket back to Sverdlovsk.

The partisan wouldn't let me be. "Why stand in line, I know all the guys in the ticket office. Give me your card, I will sort it all out for you at once." The countrywoman was also urging me on, so I entrusted the former partisan with my card. It was merely a pretext to delay me. The partisan didn't give my card back for two weeks. "There are no seats for Moscow, all students are coming back right now." I was reproaching my countrywoman: "I'm late for my classes, it's all because of you." "Nothing is going to happen, you will just arrive a couple days later. There are no tickets." This is how they delayed me and got what they wanted.

A long correspondence began, and in the summer of 1950, right after my graduation from college, the former partisan Metek came to Sverdlovsk. He stayed with my compatriots. Acquaintances or relatives were not allowed to spend the night in the dorm. We got married in the Sverdlov marriage registry office, but my husband did not want to stay in the Urals, he was longing for Rovno, for his former partisans, so he went back. He didn't like the Urals. I was not

allowed to leave with my husband. Before getting married I signed a document that I would go work on a job placement, otherwise I could lose my diploma. So I had to stay and work in Pervouralsk, in a men's school. With some effort, I was able to leave the job a year later and go join my husband in Rovno.

I started getting acquainted with Kohn's partisan family. It was a tight-knit family. I was lucky, I met many of them in our home, listened to their stories, admired their courage. I would like to share some memories of these heroes who are no longer living. How many difficulties and dangers they had to live through. They had to sacrifice themselves and their lives in the fight against fascism, so that future generations could live in peace, have such a calm, prosperous life, and honour these heroes, remember their deeds, tell their children about them, learn from them to have courage, bravery, patriotism, love for the Motherland and each other. It seems to me that God will not forgive us if we forget all of this and turn into insatiable materialists, egoists and bureaucrats, and forget the kindness and beauty of human relationships of these heroes who fought for peace in the whole world and, above all, so that we could have a Motherland, didn't become slaves, and so that fascism did not take over the whole world. Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov fought for this as well.

It pains me that immigrants from the former Soviet Union forgot about them, don't even know their names, especially the young generation. As for me, they are engraved in my memory and soul. In our house they were remembered on weekdays and holidays, at every meeting of former partisans and respected guests from Moscow and other cities. I met and spoke with A. A. Lukin, the former head of intelligence services under whose immediate supervision Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov and other partisan scouts operated. I also met the partisan doctor A. Tsessarsky and Semyonov. They came from Moscow. Sergei Trofimovich Stekhov would often come from Vinnitsa. He liked to drink tea at our house, and the tea party would last far into the night. Hearing that Sergei Trofimovich was visiting us, other former partisans would come over. They would quickly find

out about the arrival of their partisan friends, even without a phone. We had no phone. Nikola Strutinski and Nikolai Gnedyuk would come to Rovno from Lvov, enter our house as brothers. They asked how former comrades-in-arms were doing and were always ready to help each other out. Later, reminiscences continued over drinks. There wasn't any occasion that Kuznetsov wasn't remembered. Mikhail Kutovoi from Kharkov also visited us. Filyuk would come from Tsuman, he had saved Kohn's life when he was wounded. And Nuchem often visited Filyuk in Tsuman. We became close.

When the time came to depart for Canada, Nuchem found it hard to say goodbye to Filyuk, and not only to Filyuk. No one can replace comrades-in-arms. Children didn't want to leave either, they got used to their friends, teachers, to their school. The eldest daughter cried all day and all night. On the very same day that she got accepted into the Lvov Conservatory, we received a permit to leave for Canada. "You leave, I will stay here to study. Maybe you won't like it there, and I will keep the apartment for you." Kohn would not hear of it. "We will all go together. I have already lost everyone once, I will not leave you here alone. You will have relatives, you always wanted to have relatives." We did not look for better living conditions, we were happy with what we had. Kohn missed his big family. They were twelve children, him and his younger brother were left. The only surviving brother constantly asked him to reunite. So Kohn sacrificed everything for his own brother, not knowing in advance how the circumstances and the relationship with the brother's family in Canada would turn out. He later deeply regretted his decision, but it was too late.

The former partisan Nuchem Kohn bid farewell to Lukin in Moscow. Lukin was already gravely ill. "It's a pity that you are leaving, but if you want to be reunited with your only brother, I wish you well. Write to me about everything, especially about the children. I know that they don't want to leave." Even from Canada, Nuchem would write letters to Lukin. He was already hospitalized in the Kremlin clinic, and his grandson wrote letters for him. Lukin was still interested in how Kohn's fate turned out. Many people from Rovno

wrote to us, invited us to visit and come back. One family even offered their apartment, and said they would move to their son's place if we came back. "Come back, you don't have enemies here." We wanted to come back, but it didn't work out. I tried. It was not easy in the seventies – no apartment, no job. There are things dearer than money, dearer than everything in the world – friendship, loyalty, affection, love, devotion – we lost a lot, but all the good that we saw we took with us. And partisan friendship as well. As a farewell gift, Filyuk brought us a down pillow. "Ulyana sat and plucked goose feathers all week. This is a gift from us to the daughter who gets married first. And here is a turkey for the road, so you don't die from starvation." Filyuk's granddaughter, Svetochka, came to visit us ten years ago. Filyuk was already ill and couldn't come. It was Bondarchuk who wrote to us. Nuchem left him as a souvenir the chiming wall clock that I liked a lot and wanted to take with us. Kohn said goodbye to partisan family, and Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov's orderly - Nuchem Kohn - is gone. What is left are the many photographs that we brought with us, albums with letters, books of memoirs of former partisans that they gave to Nuchem Kohn as gifts.

Boris Krutikov came to visit Rovno and shared his memories. With a group of partisans, he was based in the same Ganovich forest as Kuznetsov (after Kohn delivered Kuznetsov's heavy suitcase to the specified destination and Kuznetsov sent him back), but he didn't get to meet Kuznetsov. In constant battles with the German fascists who had learned the squad's location from a traitor, with the Banderites and other hostile parties, many partisans from his group perished. Boris Krutikov was severely wounded. A small group of his partisans strived to reach Lvov. They used branches to make a stretcher and carried their commander in their arms. Krutikov was saved, but his leg had to be amputated. What a variety of visitors we had! Kolya Bondarchuk would stop by like our home was his own, Petya Mamonets, whose life Kohn saved from the fascists' bullet, Seredenko. Those three were inseparable. Together they performed, together they marched in the Victory Day parade, together they visited Moscow by invitation of the War

Veterans Committee. Some special friendship bound these former partisans. They shared their memories with schoolchildren, college students, workers, often performed in military units. Schoolchildren from Sverdlovsk paid us a visit, they were so proud of their countryman, tried to find out all the details about Kuznetsov. Schoolchildren from Leningrad also visited. Metek Kohn, Kuznetsov's orderly, met Nikolai Kuznetsov's brother and sister. Kohn was last to see N. I. Kuznetsov alive. Kuznetsov had been wandering in the woods for three days and got ambushed. Banderites disguised as Red Army soldiers wanted to catch him alive and deliver him to the Germans for a big reward, but the brave intelligence officer exploded himself with a grenade and took many traitors, Ukrainian nationalists, with him. "Russian scouts don't surrender alive." Thus died the legendary hero, the intelligence officer Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov, on March 9, 1944.

At home I heard a lot of disputes about this. "Why didn't Kuznetsov have better protection?" Everyone mourned the hero's loss at the end of the war, but none more than Kuznetsov's orderly, Nuchem "Metek" Kohn. Kuznetsov was only 32 years old. Learning about Kuznetsov's death, on the very same night, D. N. Medvedev opened Nikolai Ivanovich's letter in the presence of his comrades-in-arms, and they had an idea of establishing a monument for the hero in Rovno and Lvov. Medvedev believed it was his duty to tell people about the life and death of Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov. In November 1944, he received the title of the Hero of the Soviet Union postmortem.

Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov knew that he was going to die, but he was ready to give up his life for his Motherland, for Stalin. In a letter to his brother Viktor he wrote:

Moscow, June 27, 1942

“Dear brother Vitya!

In the next few days I depart for the front. I’ll be flying on a plane. Vitya, you are my beloved brother and comrade-in-arms, so I want to be frank with you before my departure to execute the military assignment. The war for the liberation of our Motherland from the fascist devils demands our life. We must unavoidably spill much of our own blood, so our beloved Fatherland flourishes and develops, and so our people live free. For the sake of victory over the enemy, our people will not spare that which is most dear – our own life. Sacrifices are inevitable. And I want to tell you frankly that the chances of my coming back alive are very low. It’s almost a hundred percent certain that I will have to sacrifice myself. And I go in with perfect calm and in perfect consciousness, as I am deeply aware that I am giving my life for a sacred and righteous cause, for the present and the flourishing future of our Motherland. We will destroy fascism. Russia will remember us forever, happy children will sing songs about us and mothers, with gratitude and blessings, will tell children how in 1942 we gave our life for the happiness of our dearly beloved Fatherland.

**Lots of love,
Your brother Nikolai.”
(abridged)**

Nikolai Ivanovich’s wish came true on August 25, 1942. The very same day, before departing for the frontlines, Nikolai Ivanovich sent a last letter to his brother Viktor. Viktor sent this letter to Medvedev in 1949, when he found out about his brother’s death.

Nowadays there’s no such patriotism like there was at the time, both on the frontlines and on the home front. There was one slogan: “Everything for the front! Everything for Victory! For Motherland, for Stalin! On wards!” Without this patriotism and faith in Victory, it would be impossible to defeat such a treacherous, powerful enemy, armed to its teeth.

We don't know what influenced Kuznetsov so strongly to volunteer on such a dangerous mission. Even Medvedev, Lukin and Stekhov, heads of the special squad "The Victorious", didn't know that he was being thoroughly prepared for this mission, as his abilities were taken into account. All of this was kept in strictest secret. Great hopes were invested in him, and he justified them. Kuznetsov and Zorge became the most famous intelligence agents in that cruel, bloody war. Kuznetsov was certain that Russia would not forget him.

On February 2, 1961, a monument to N. I. Kuznetsov was unveiled in Rovno. On the Kuznetsov square, the former partisans of the special squad "The Victorious" and the hero's relatives gathered, there was quite a crowd. Nuchem Kohn took our eldest daughter, Lena, who was seven years old, to the monument's opening, and I was there as well, couldn't miss such an occasion.

On the pedestal, there is an inscription: "Hero of the Soviet Union Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov. 1911-1944."

**I love life, I am still young,
But if there's a need to
Sacrifice my life for Motherland,
Whom I love as my own mother – I will do it...**

N. I. Kuznetsov



Unveiling of the Monument, the second right is N. Kohn.



The first right is N. Kohn, the next is Kusniezov's sister and Filyuk.



The second left is Kusniezov's brother, first right is N. Kohn

As the wife of Nuchem Kohn, former partisan and orderly of the legendary Hero of the Soviet Union N. I. Kuznetsov, I welcomed the heroes of “The Victorious” squad into our home and heard many amazing stories about this remarkable man, about whom the former partisans of this camp would always reminisce. Kuznetsov’s photo, a gift from Leningrad schoolchildren, hung in our house in a place of honour.

It was very painful to receive a letter from the son of our former neighbour, saying that monuments to Kuznetsov and Medvedev, heroes who fought for the liberation of these cities from fascist devils, were removed in both Rovno and Lvov. I will not conceal, that when I read that letter here in Montreal, I cried. My life is on the decline, and he was and still is my favourite hero, from whom we can learn a lot. I honour all heroes of the Great Patriotic War, but this hero takes a particular place in my heart. During the war I lived in Sverdlovsk, worked in a factory located in Vtuzgorodok, near the industrial college. I know Uralmash, the giant factory where Kuznetsov worked, very well. I can imagine how much he lost, sacrificing everything for his beloved Motherland, for peace, for the future generations, including my grandchildren.

I cannot but remember and share with you the truth about that man. Nuchem told me a story about a Jewish boy:

Once Kuznetsov found a Jewish boy in the woods, shivering from cold. He had only a note pinned to his shirt: “Pinya”, the boy’s name. Apparently his parents left him in the woods, when they were being taken to the firing squad, hoping that somebody would save him. Kuznetsov took off his jacket, put it on the boy, carried him in his arms to the first aid post, asked to get him patched up and said: “I will adopt him after the war.” Then he sent Pinya on a plane to Moscow and asked that he be educated there. The rest of that boy’s fate remained unknown to Kohn and other partisans. Kohn was on guard and happened to be present at the interrogation of a captive German major by Kuznetsov.

The German complained that it was against the law that his hands were bound. Kuznetsov asked him: “What laws are you talking about? Is it legal to kill innocent women, old people and children? Is it legal to plunder, burn whole villages and their residents?” The German major didn’t believe that Kuznetsov was a Russian intelligence officer and asked Kohn about it. “It can’t be true! He’s a German traitor!” Kohn confirmed: “Kuznetsov is Russian.”

This is far from everything that I heard. Many partisans have written their memories down, I don’t want to repeat things.

Kuznetsov

I'm reading the book *"Intelligence Agent Nikolai Kuznetsov"*, which N. Kuznetsov's brother Viktor gave to Kohn when he visited Rovno, and Kohn and Filyuk took him around the memorial sites of partisan glory. As Nikolai Ivanovich's orderly, Kohn shared his memories with Viktor. It's hard to believe that a village boy, the son of a simple peasant from a forgotten, distant Siberian village, Zyryanka, in Sverdlovsk Oblast, could become so accomplished in the German language by studying on his own that even General Koch himself didn't recognize in him a Russian intelligence agent.

Nika, as he was known in the village, became interested in the German language back in school. His teacher, Nina Alekseyevna Avtokratova, spoke perfect German. She received her education in Switzerland. Nika had an exceptional aptitude for languages. At six, Nika learned to read and write, and loved to listen to heroic poems, especially poems about Susanin. It was a friendly family, and Nika helped with the chores, especially during harvest time. He didn't miss a chance to practice with a German war prisoner, with a pharmacist from Austria. He didn't think at the time that this interest in the German language would immortalize his name. In 1931, in the city of Kudymkar, Nika changed his name to Nikolai. He didn't like the name Nikanor.

I graduated from the German department of the Sverdlovsky College of Foreign Languages and wanted to become a translator. I studied with the best teachers of German of Vienna and Berlin, I was a straight-A student, but you have to be a genius in order to achieve the perfect mastery of a foreign language that Kuznetsov did. German has many dialects. Kuznetsov hadn't even been to Germany, but in a short time he mastered the dialect of the province of the Aryan man he claimed to be, so that even Koch himself, who came from the same province, could not recognize in him a non-German.

In 1936, Nikolai Ivanovich defended his thesis in engineering in flawless German and was working in Sverdlovsk at the Uralmash factory, where there were German workers. And there he spoke with them and perfected his German. He was very hardworking. His father encouraged the children to work hard, tried to give his children, especially Nika, an education. Right before his death, he instructed them: "Educate Nika." The whole family did their best and gave Nikolai a chance to graduate from the Sverdlovsk Industrial College and become an engineer.

Moreover, he graduated from the distance learning program of the German Department at the College of Foreign Languages, and received a diploma. Everything seemed to be going very well. Suddenly the war broke out, Germany broke the peace treaty with the Soviet Union. The young, handsome, happy, talented Kuznetsov - hardworking, with a bright future, in love - was preparing to marry, to start a family. He really loved life, children, and he sacrificed all of it, volunteering to protect his Motherland, you and me, our children, grandchildren, for peace on earth, and died before turning 33.



Kusniezov's Shelter in the Forest of Zuman



Colonel D.N. Medvedev' Shelter at the Lopaten Landmark



The House of Stepan Golubovitch, where Kusniezov perished.



N. Kusniezov's brother and sister at his grave in Lvov.

Soon we will be celebrating Victory Day. Remember the Siberian hero, Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov, who gave his young life for the Motherland, for the happiness of future generations. He is worthy of it. Kuznetsov's orderly, Nuchem Kohn, never forgot him. Kuznetsov's portrait hung in our apartments in Rovno and Montreal until Nuchem Kohn's death. Now his portrait graces the small apartment of the widow of Kuznetsov's orderly, Grunia Slutzky-Kohn. The memory of him will not fade.

It reminds us all: "People, be vigilant! Live in peace! Protect peace! There is nothing more terrible than war!" Until the end of his life, Kohn would reminisce about Kuznetsov and share with me many episodes of life in a partisan squad. On one occasion, fascist soldiers surrounded the special squad and tried to destroy everyone. A traitor gave away their location. He didn't stay in the squad for long. He stole state money from one of the partisans, ran off and began to cooperate with the Banderites. It was he, who showed the fascists the location of the partisan squad. The fighting lasted a long time. Many partisans perished in this battle, but so did many Germans. As a child, Kohn had friends - little German boys. He studied in school with them. "Gustav Miller saved me when I was drowning. Peter Kenig was my best comrade. Where are they now? Maybe it was they who surrounded our partisan squad. How would they act if they saw me here? Such thoughts were swirling in my head.

"In my city there were many Germans. They would visit us at home. Mother welcomed them. One German was a friend of my father's. The fascists shot him because he tried to save my father." Lukin and Medvedev did not just decide to send Nuchem Kohn to Rovno on a whim. Kohn understood German, was an experienced watchmaker. Germans would bring looted watches for him to repair and they would talk aloud amongst each other. They didn't know that Kohn understood everything and reported important information to Kuznetsov, who in turn reported it to Lukin. Before Nuchem, another watchmaker worked there. He was not very

experienced and didn't know German. For the leaders of the squad, Kohn was a godsend. I was amazed at how deeply all names and all events were engraved in his memory.

In the squad, Nuchem was a mentor to Mikhail Kutovoi. He was ten years older than Nuchem, an engineer, already married with a son. After the war, Mikhail worked in Lvov. Hearing that Nuchem was in Kiev, he asked off work and came to see him. Nuchem was also delighted. "Rest a bit, I'll be back soon." He ran to the market, bought a bottle of vodka, and some *zakuska* to go with it. After the war, the black market had a small selection. He poured a glass of vodka for his friend and a glass for himself: "A toast to our meeting!" Kutovoi looked at Kohn, slapped his face and said: "I came to visit a friend and found a drunkard," then turned around and walked away. Kohn followed. "I have no one, everyone was killed, I was left alone and started drinking out of despair. What do you want?" "I want you to pour out all the vodka and never drink again." "But I paid so much for this bottle at the market. Let's drink this one and I won't drink anymore, I promise." "No, you will pour just a little bit of vodka for yourself and for me, we'll drink to mark our meeting." And before Nuchem could say anything, Kutovoi poured the whole bottle of vodka into the garbage. From then on, Kohn didn't drink anymore. He would only drink a little on holidays. Kohn decided not to lose such a friend because of vodka. A while later, Kutovoi moved to Kharkov again and started working at the same factory as before. We were in touch. Mikhail invited us to the wedding of his daughter, who was born after the war ended. We congratulated them and prepared to go to the wedding. We arranged for our neighbours to look after the children. Our friends, Mikhail Kutovoi with his wife and son, went to the village to get groceries. In the village, everything was cheaper than the city. There was an accident, Mikhail and his wife died on the spot, their son was severely wounded. He was taken to the hospital and saved. Suddenly we heard that there would be no wedding, instead of the wedding there would be a funeral. We were deeply impacted by the deaths of such close friends. Mikhail escaped from captivity. His life, just like Kohn's, was

often in danger. He looked after Kohn as a younger brother, so that he wouldn't take unnecessary risks. Mikhail survived the war, was preparing for his daughter's wedding, and died so unexpectedly. You never know what awaits you. He came to the unveiling of the monument to Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov. He visited us. We hosted him with greatest care, begged him to stay, to be our guest for longer, to rest. He was always in a rush, really wanted to arrange things well. Nuchem couldn't return to his normal self for a long time after this event. Kutovoi was a good person, a good family man and a devoted friend.

On April 23, 2015, Vera Grigoryevna Gribanova passed away. She was a person with the kindest heart. She was Kohn's close friend, a combatant in the Great Patriotic War, a partisan and orderly of "The Victorious" squad, and a participant of the Resistance. In 2009, she was awarded the Order of the 3rd Class for participating in combat, saving persons of Jewish background from German fascists, and preserving the memory of Holocaust victims.

Time flies. February 11, 2016 marked a six-year anniversary of the death of my husband, Nuchem Kohn. "Let's go visit his grave, Grunia", said Boris Petrovich Sidnev. "Let's wait a bit, there's a lot of snow, we won't see the monument." "I will find it", said Boris Petrovich confidently. And he really did. With his bare hands, he cleared the snow off the monument and helped me come up closer to the monument through deep snow. We stood there and said a prayer. Boris Petrovich captured that moment, took a photo of me by the monument, and I took a photo of him. There was not a soul around, just us.

"You are not forgotten, partisan Nuchem Kohn, orderly of the legendary hero Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov. Your relatives remember you, and so do your friends."



УШЕЛ ГЕРОЙ

Он был молодой, стройный, красивый парень, с густой шевелюрой черных волос. До войны жил в Польше, которую в 1939 году оккупировала фашистская Германия. Евреи были загнаны в гетто. Но непокорный Нухем Кон, раненый, сорвал со своей одежды желтую шестиконечную звезду и вместе с товарищем бежал. Так он оказался в Луцке.

Искусный часовой мастер, Нухем Кон стал работать по специальности – сначала за тарелку супа и ночлег, а потом, увидев, что у него «золотые руки», юноше стали платить. Заботясь о родных, оставшихся в польском гетто, он постоянно поддерживал их посылками, оставляя себе из заработанных денег самую малость.

Но продолжалось это недолго. 22 июня 1941 года Германия напала на Советский Союз. Немцы вошли в Луцк. Нухем Кон организовал первую еврейскую партизанскую группу из 18 человек и почти год сражался с врагом в Цуманских лесах. В этой же группе воевал и его старший брат, который погиб во время боевого задания.

Когда их осталось только трое, группа Кона продолжила воевать в партизанской группе Александра Фалюка. Здесь Нухем снова был ранен. Его спас Фалюк. Еще не вполне оправившись от ранения, Нухем Кон присоединился к партизанскому отряду Дмитрия Медведева.

А затем отважного молодого партизана послали с заданием в Ровно, где под видом часового мастера-поляка, каждую минуту рискуя жизнью, он год был связным легендарного разведчика Николая Кузнецова. О деятельности Нухема Кона в партизанском отряде можно прочитать в его книге на английском языке «The voice from the forest» («Голос из леса»).

Нухем Кон был скромным, всегда готовым помочь своим товарищам по борьбе, делился с боевыми друзьями последним, никогда не забывал их. Он прожил свою жизнь честно и достойно. Последние годы он долго болел, но никогда не жаловался на судьбу, стойко переносил все страдания.

Умирая, Нухем Кон оставил свой наказ: «Будьте бдительны! Не забывайте уроков Холокоста, помните о погибших невинных жертвах фашизма! Человеконенавистничество, расизм – самая страшная болезнь, от которой гибнут миллионы людей во всем мире, независимо от их национальности и вероисповедания».

Не стало смелого, благородного человека, настоящего воина-борца, верного сына и гордости еврейского народа. Да будет благословенна его память!

Спасибо всем, кто пришел проводить в последний путь Нухема Кона и разделил горе нашей семьи.

Груня СЛУЦКАЯ-КОН

A Hero Passed Away

He was a young, slim, handsome young man, with a head of thick black hair. Before the war he lived in Poland, which was occupied by Nazi Germany in 1939. Jews were driven into the ghetto. But the headstrong Nuchem Kohn, wounded, tore off the yellow six-pointed star from his clothes and escaped together with a friend. That is how he found himself in Lutsk.

A skillful watchmaker, Nuchem Kohn began working in this field – at first for a bowl of soup and shelter. Later, realizing that he has a magic touch, people began to pay the young man. Concerned about his relatives who were left in the Polish ghetto, he continued to support them, sending packages and keeping only the smallest part of the money he earned for himself.

But this did not last long. On June 22, 1941, Germany attacked the Soviet Union. Germans entered Lutsk. Nuchem Kohn organized the first Jewish partisan squad of eighteen people, and fought the enemy in the Tsuman forests for almost a year. His older brother, who died on an assignment, had fought in the same squad.

When only three of them were left, Kohn's group continued to fight in the partisan squad of Aleksandr Filyuk. There Nuchem was wounded again. He was saved by Filyuk. Even before fully recovering from the wound, Nuchem Kohn joined the partisan squad of Dmitry Medvedev.

Later the courageous young partisan was sent on a mission to Rovno, where, disguised as a Polish watchmaker, risking his life every minute, he worked for a year as an orderly of the legendary intelligence agent Nikolai Kuznetsov. You can read about Nuchem Kohn's activity in the partisan squad in his English-language book: "*The Voice From the Forest*".

Nuchem Kohn was modest and always ready to help his comrades-in-arms. He shared his last possessions with his brothers-in-arms and never forgot them. He lived his life with honesty and integrity. In the last years, he was ill for a long time, but he never complained about his fate, stoically enduring all suffering.

On his deathbed, Nuchem Kohn spoke his final words: "Be vigilant! Do not forget the lessons of the Holocaust, remember the murdered innocent victims of fascism! Hatred of mankind, racism – this is the most terrible illness, from which millions of people in the whole world die, regardless of their nationality and religion."

This brave noble man, true warrior, faithful son and pride of the Jewish people, is no more. May his memory be blessed!

Thank you to everyone who came to pay their last respects to Nuchem Kohn and shared our family's grief.

Grunia Slutzky-Kohn

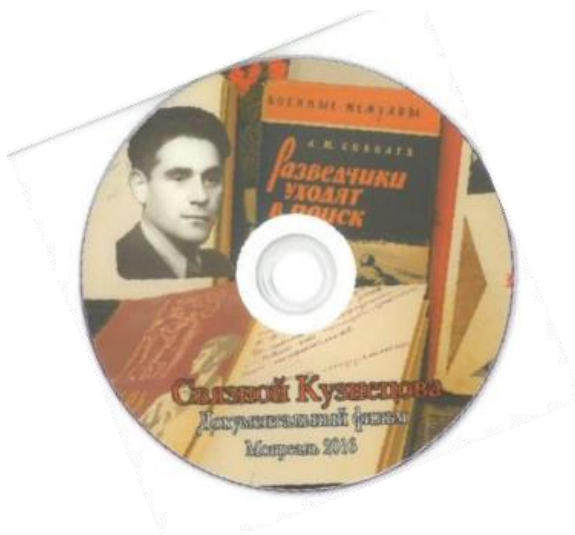
Dedicated to the First Anniversary
Of my Husban's Death

*Not just days but years fly by,
Such is the law of nature.
Yesterday the sun smiled upon us,
Birds chirped, sang songs.
Today there's a downpour,
The sun is gone, God's grace
Turned away from me.
Death came to visit,
Carried away my husband,
Deprived grandchildren of their grandfather.
Cruel, treacherous you are, death!
Oh my proud falcon!
For a whole year now you rest in the grave,
Our community does not forget you,
Remembers you with a kind word.*

*And it is already spring outside,
Everything blossoms, sings, smiles.
Life goes on.
I often see you in my dreams,
Young, alive,
You stand and wait for me.
I rush to meet you,
I open the door – you are no longer there...
I look for you everywhere, I call, I do not find you.
I wake up – I feel afraid.
And tears fall on their own,
On the pillow, on the bed,
Can't be hold them back.
Before my eyes you stand,
All the years spent together,
We shared joy and misfortune,
I was your faithful companion.
My soul is so sad, so lonely,
Come to me, at least in a dream,
At least in a blink of an eye.*

April 5, 2011





**Documentary film:
Kuznetsov's Orderly
Montreal 2016
YOUTUBE, BORIS SIDNEV,
for which me and my family
are forever grateful to him.**

Grunia Slutzky-Kohn.



People's Avengers of the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945



To the famed partisan of our squad, an ally in the fight against German fascism during the Great Patriotic War, far behind enemy lines, to Nuchem Yakubovich Kohn – a keepsake from the author.

A. Lukin. October 27, 1968. Moscow.

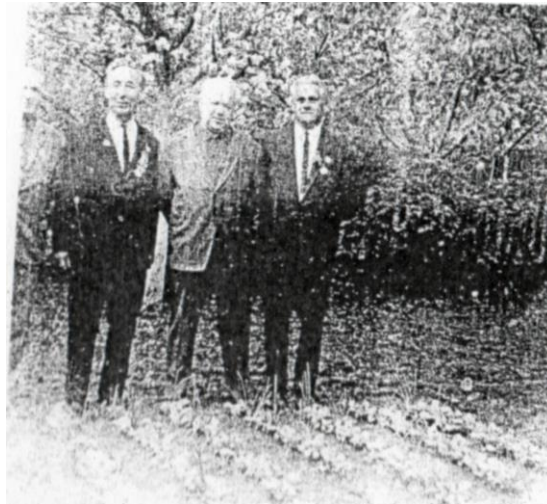


Брату другу
и соратнику
в борьбе с фашистами и
оккупантами на
Ровенщине Науму Кohn
от Виктора Кочеткова
10 мая 1971

To the comrade-in-arms and ally in the fight against the fascist occupants of the Rovno region, to our own Naum Kohn – a keepsake from Victor Kochetkov. May 10, 1971



From the right: Burin, Kohn, Stefansky, Bondarchuk



Dr. Kleshkan (on the left), Lukin, Kohn



Boris Krutikov on crutches, Kohn standing in the back



V. Tsesarsky, the partisan doctor, on the left, Kohn on the right.



First on the right – Vera Gribanova, S. Stekhov. Fourth – Valya Dovger, Seredenko, Kohn.



Nahum Kohn

Former partisans of the special squad in Moscow, 1972.



**From the right: L. Vinokurov, A. Mogilner, Kohn,
December 29, 1997.**



**Russian Consul General Igor Lebedev awards Kohn with
the Medal of General Zhukov, May 9, 2000**



С.Г. Стехов справа, Н. Кон слева

2 стр.

№ 4 - май, 1995

Голос общины



ВETERAN

Передо мной книга "Бессмертные подвиги", выпущенная центральным издательством в 1970 году к 25-летию Великой Победы. В предисловии названы семь человек, которые "особо проявили себя в борьбе с врагом в отряде Дмитрия Медведева", и среди них Нухем Кон.

Впервые я его увидел 2 года назад. Трудно было поверить, что этот уже немолодой, но стройный мужчина с белой шевелюрой (вернее, что осталось от нее), с добрыми глазами и чувством юмора, - это и есть тот самый Метек Ковальский, который почти год был связным у легендарного советского разведчика Николая Кузнецова.

Before me lies the book Immortality for a Heroic Deed, published by the central publishing house in 1970 to mark the 25th anniversary of the Great Victory. The introduction names seven people who "particularly distinguished themselves in the fight against the enemy in the squad of Dmitry Medvedev," and among them is Nuchem Kohn.

I first met him two years ago. It was difficult to believe that this man, already aging but slim, with white hair (or rather, what was left of it), kind eyes and a sense of humour, was the very same Metek Kovalsky who for almost a year served as an orderly for the legendary Soviet intelligence agent Nikolai Kuznetsov.



Russian Consul in Montreal, I. Eliseev, congratulates Kohn on his award. December 28, 1999



Svetlana, Filyuk's granddaughter, visiting us. July 2, 2002



**Wishing you good health and long years of life! Sincerely,
Russian Consul in Montreal I. Eliseev, December 28, 1999.**



Grandchildren's birthday, August 31, 2000



Grandfather was already ill and took some rest on his daughter's bed.



**Aleksandr and Ulyana Filyuk,
Lutsk, Ukraine, 1995**



**A memento for the seasoned partisan Naum Yakubovich Kohn
from
his partisan comrades-in-arms, the Filyuks. February 26,
1990, Lutsk.**



JEWISH PARTISAN RECEIVES MEDAL

**Russian Consul Valery Erofeev, left, made a special trip to the Jewish Eldercare Center for a presentation Of a medal for the 60th anniversary of V-E Day to Resident Nuhem Kohn, a Jewish partisan, who posed as a Polish Christian in Rovno, which was a major Gestapo base. Next to Nuhem Kohn is his wife Grunia Slutsky-Kohn.
May 9, 2005, Montreal.**

ФЕДЕРАЛЬНАЯ
СЛУЖБА БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ
РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ
(ФСБ России)

ЦЕНТРАЛЬНЫЙ АРХИВ

ул. Б. Лубянка, 2 г. Москва, 101000

19 10.2012 № 10/А-К-2536с

АРХИВНАЯ СПРАВКА

В материалах Центрального архива ФСБ России имеются сведения о том, что Кон Нухем Якубович, уроженец г. Щерац (Щерац) Польши, проживал в г. Лодзь, часовой мастер, с августа 1941 г. по 1 октября 1944 г. являлся бойцом партизанского отряда «Победители», действовавшего в годы войны на временно оккупированных территориях Украины и Белоруссии под командованием Героя Советского Союза Медведева Д.Н.

Основание: архивное дело

Начальник архива



Ю.А. Грамбичский

Copy No.1

Federal Security Service
Of the Russian Federation
(FSB of Russia)

Central Archive

B. Lubyanka St, 2, Moscow, 101000

19.10.2012 N 10/A-K-2536c

Confirmation from the Archive

The Central Archive materials of the FSB of Russia contain data confirming that Nuchem Yakubovich Kohn, born in the city of Sieradz of Poland, resident of the city of Lodz, a watchmaker, from August 1941 till October 1, 1944, fought in the partisan squad “The Victorious”, which in wartime operated under the leadership of the Hero of the Soviet Union D. N. Medvedev in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and Belarus.

Basis: Archival case Number 20631.

Archive Director

Y. A. Trambitsky

Victory Day

Seventy years passed since the day of the Great Victory in the Patriotic War. And us, Nuchem Kohn and I, his wife, Grunia Slutzky-Kohn, made our contribution to this Victory. N. Kohn was a partisan and scout, orderly of the legendary intelligence agent Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov. Until the end of his days, he lived on his memories of war, in particular of the Hero of the Soviet Union Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov. I worked in Siberia and in the Urals, employed in a factory in a military workshop. Even young girls did their best – Everything for the front! Everything for Victory! It's a pity that N. Kohn didn't live to see this day. Consul General of the Russian Federation, Y. V. Bedzhanyan, congratulated all veterans in Montreal on Victory Day in the Great Patriotic War, and awarded them with Jubilee Medals of the 70 Years of Victory.



Grunia is getting a medal



Sergei Safarov is getting a medal



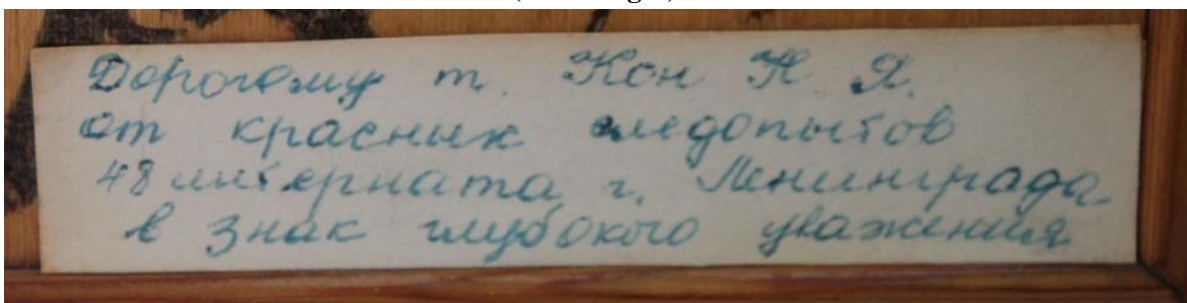
Grunia Kohn



Left Sergei Safarov, Grunia, Isaak Rukshin. Violetta is standing in the back. Celebrating Victory Day in Violetta's café on May 9, 2015.



**Hero of the Soviet Union Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov.
The gift to N. Kohn from the Rangers of Boarding School
No.48 in Leningrad.
Grunia Slutzky-Kohn (on the left)
Nuchem Kohn (on the right) and his awards**



Victory Day

*I have known a hard life
In those distant terrible years,
I am sensitive by nature.
War claimed all relatives,
I was left all alone.
I began to write poems,
They helped me fight against fate,
Study, achieve something in life.
What drew you, executioners,
To spill innocent blood?
To die and perish in a foreign land,
Destroy by fire everything in your path?
What diabolic force
Made you chase people
Into their graves alive, and murder,
Shoot, shoot by day and night!
You did not fear God,
Nor trial, nor investigation.
And your mothers waited for their sons,
But did not get to see them.
They, too, learned the pain of loss,
You were dying, uninvited guests,
In someone else's land.
He who digs the grave for another
Will fall into it himself.
Me, too, you deprived me of joy –
By your vile, dirty hands
My whole family perished.
You, executioners, did not live to see Victory Day,
But I got to see it, I welcomed
This long-awaited day.
Burning maiden's tears
Streamed from my eyes.
Where are you, my dear ones? Where should I go?*

*I have no home, no family!
I cannot forget you,
Month of May, a spring day.
All around flowers blooming,
And I don't know where the graves of my dear ones are.
Where can I go and bow
Before their ashes and lay down
Flowers, darkened with burning tears?
What price have we paid for Victory?
Rivers of blood were spilled,
And our mothers and wives weep,
And children left without fathers.
This is what you did, war –
You deprived us of the dearest people in the world.
Why? What for?
Who needed it, this war?
Wake up, people!
There are no victors in war!
Victory costs many victims
And much blood.
Our dear sons perish,
Husbands, fathers and grandfathers.
Let there be peace on all the earth!
Protect peace, peoples!
Protect peace!
VICTORY – you are joy and tears,
You are a mixture of happiness and grief,
You are the pain of loss.
We cannot forget this date –
May 9, 1945!
Honour and glory to you, Russian soldiers,
And to everyone who fought for peace!*

May 2014



**From left: Dr. Ida Gleser, Grunia and Nuchem Kohn,
Dr. Naum and Mira Freiman, Aron Tuzman
(wearing sunglasses)**

The Unforgotten Photograph

On the very first day of the Great Patriotic War, fascists occupied the city of Grodno in Western Belarus, where I was born, and immediately murdered 80 most talented and educated young Jewish intellectuals. Young people started fleeing to the forest. The Germans found out about this, sent out troopers and shot all young men and women, the finest among Jewish youth. I escaped miraculously, running off on foot with a group of young women. I was the youngest among them.



One photograph from pre-war years reminds me of the horrors of the first days of war. I treasure it as the apple of my eye. I look at it and remember childhood, the modest but happy life in the circle of my relatives and dear ones, the soulful songs we sang in unison. This photograph was taken on the eve of war. I took it with me when I ran away to escape the fascists, walked 360 kilometers on foot on the roads of war, saw its first victims. This one incident I remembered all my life. When I look at this photograph, I always remember that young, beautiful woman from Minsk. Her husband was drafted into the army immediately. With three kids and an old father, she tried to run away from constant bombing, to save her children.

During the journey, her infant fell ill. She was advised to take him to the district hospital located not far from the road. She left her children, a boy and a girl, with their grandfather, and hurried to the hospital. The child died on the way. Doctors could not save him, no matter how much she begged. This was out of their power.

At that time, there was a raid. German planes descended closer to the ground and shot at the civilians, into the crowd of refugees who were walking down the road of salvation, further from the frontlines. Russian soldiers screamed: "Down!" People didn't listen, ran into the woods. The grandfather and the children couldn't get to the woods in time and were killed. The fascist pilot had no pity for the old man or the children. Soldiers quickly cleared the road of corpses, those who were killed were buried at once. Enemy raids repeated several times a day. The unfortunate woman

came running back and, seeing that neither her father nor her kids were where they were supposed to be, began asking everyone along the road: "Have you seen an old grandfather with two grandchildren? A boy and a girl, I left them right here and ran off to the hospital. My little son died in my arms. Where are my children? Good people, I beg you, tell me where they are hiding!" She came up to me as well, and asked plaintively: "Dear girl, have you seen a grandfather with two grandchildren, my little birds?" – "No, I haven't." Nobody wanted to tell her the truth. I held back tears, turned around several times and saw how this poor mother no longer asked questions but screamed with pain, with grief, in a voice not her own. It seemed to me that she had lost her mind. And now, after almost 75 years, every time I take out this photograph, it brings up for me the pain of loss: not only of my own family, but of that unknown young woman from Minsk, weeping and searching for her little children and her old father, the victims of fascism in the first days of the Great Patriotic War. (Photo of Grunia Slutzky)

The Old Fortuneteller

Gypsies would often come to our city. They stole anything they could lay hands on - quickly, deftly, you couldn't catch them. People would close their doors in front of them and not let them into the house, but they somehow snuck in anyway and pestered you: "Give me some gold, I'll tell your fortune, I'll tell the whole truth." They wouldn't leave you alone until they received something. Young girls would often get their fortunes told, others stood around and observed. We, children, were afraid of the gypsies. We were warned: "If you don't obey, gypsies will come at night and steal you. You'll sleep in the forest, without daddy and mommy, and if you don't obey them, they'll whip you with a belt." Children would fall asleep in fear. Mom did not get involved with them, otherwise something would always suddenly disappear from the house, but mom had known this particular old gypsy for many years. She showed up at our door once a year. Mom

would feed her, give her something for the road. She did not steal from us.

Usually mom didn't allow me to listen to their conversation. This time I walked into the kitchen unnoticed, and the fortuneteller saw me. "You grew up so much in a year, you are all grown up. Show me your hand, my beauty." Mom had no time to object. I quickly extended my hand to her in jest.

The old gypsy looked closely at my hand and told my fortune to me. "Oh, sweetheart, misfortune awaits you, there will be war. You will live through a lot. You will remain an orphan, alone. You will be attractive, a beauty. Be on your guard against the Queen of Spades, she is preparing a bayonet to pierce your heart with. Avoid her. She has great envy towards you. You are a trusting girl, you are young. The Queen of Spades is angry and vengeful. Cards tell me everything, I see everything."

"Enough!" – said Mom. I got frightened and ran away. The fortune-teller shook her head and went off. I did not believe the fortuneteller. I showed the fortuneteller my hand in jest, and she predicted my destiny. Who bestowed such power of foresight on the old gypsy woman, it's hard to say. Mom hugged me, held me to her breast, kissed me. She couldn't imagine that I, her beloved daughter, would so soon be left an orphan.

Kind Souls

Fifteen years after I left Sverdlovsk, I went to the Urals once again, with my youngest daughter of seven, to visit an old compatriot, Wolf Ilyich Shuv with his wife, whom I met by chance in 1947. Their only son volunteered to go to the front and perished near Kiev in 1944, at the age of twenty-two. They grew attached to me as one of their own, and I grew attached to them. Their pain was great, and so was mine. I had just gotten back from Grodno where my whole family had perished, couldn't collect myself, did not want to socialize with anyone. Local girls invited me over, I would reject invitations, didn't want to go. I mourned my relatives in solitude, couldn't accept the grief that befell me.

During the most difficult time of my life, God sent me a gift that I did not expect at all. "Grunia, someone is looking for you and waiting in the hallway." I went out into the hallway to see who was looking for me. A woman I didn't know, no longer young but still beautiful, came up to me and asked: "Are you Grunia Slutzky?" "Yes." "I've been waiting for you for a long time." "You are mistaken, I don't know you." "We heard about you. My husband is originally from Grodno, he wants to meet you. When could you come visit us? Maybe today?" "I can't today." "Are you busy? Then I will come pick you up next Saturday. You will sleep at our place and come back to the dorm on Sunday." I still didn't want to see anyone. The following Saturday, I left the lecture hall and Sofia Petrovna was already waiting for me. We rode the tram in silence for over an hour. We arrived at a vacant lot, there were only three houses. "We live in the second house, we recently got an apartment. They'll be building more houses here." Sofia Petrovna opened the doors of the apartment: "Come in, be our guest. Wolf Ilyich will return from work soon, then we'll dine together." Everything in the house was very modest and simple, but very tidy. A big portrait hung on the wall. "This is our son Boris. He died. He was only twenty-two. You could have been his bride."

She began crying, and I couldn't hold back tears either. At that moment, my compatriot Wolf Ilyich came back from work. He was the head economist at the Novotrubny Factory, which employed over 10,000 people. Near the Novotrubny Factory they built the giant factory Uralmash, where Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov worked in his day.

"Sonechka, how are you welcoming the guest? Put something out on the table, then we'll have the energy to talk." At that time, the card system was still in place, it was very difficult to get produce. Sofia Petrovna served vegetable soup. To a poor student this was luxury. I couldn't eat, everything got stuck in my throat. Everything seemed like a dream. I was no longer used to the comfort of home. After supper, my countryman hugged me: "Feel at home. You are from Grodno, one of our own. Maybe you knew my brother Shuv?" "Yes, his son was a year older than me." "Sonechka,

she knew my brother!” He was delighted. I had no good news to tell them. Their relatives died, just like mine.

Wolf Ilyich became a refugee back in World War I. Fate took him to the Urals, but he hadn’t forgotten Grodno, remembered every street and every lane. “Do you remember the Jewish song about *bulba*?” It was the anthem of the poor. Every day we eat *bulba* (potatoes), on Saturday a *bulba* kugel, a sort of casserole, on Sunday it’s *bulba* again. He tried to lighten up the atmosphere. I was still lost in my thoughts, far, far away from reality. “I will sing to you the song of my times. A poor widow sang this song to her son in the crib: ‘You will grow up and be rich, my son.’ But her wish did not come true – the son grew up and stayed a poor man. He, his wife and his children walked around in rags, always hungry. Even on Saturday after prayer, they could not afford a little wine for ‘l’chaim’, as the custom demands, but drank cold well water from a broken, useless piece of scrap.” Wolf Ilyich sang with feeling, he had no voice. “How do you like my voice?” For the first time in many long years I smiled. “Now let’s hear how you sing.”

Late that night they made the bed for me, heated up water to wash. To a poor student at the time, this was extraordinary. We would stand in line for hours in order to wash in a city bathhouse. This is how our friendship started. Sofia Petrovna was an intellectual woman, she collected issues of *Literaturnaya Gazeta* for me and clipped interesting articles from other newspapers. When I visited them, she made me read all of it: “You must know what is happening in the world.”

A few years later I married Kohn, a former partisan. I did not know at the time that he was the orderly of N. I. Kuznetsov. He said little about himself. We got married. As we left the courthouse, my husband said to me: “We just got married, we need to celebrate it.” I didn’t have a wedding dress but a plain cotton dress, and he had plain trousers and a plain shirt. Out in the street a woman was selling beer, straight out of a barrel. It was a hot summer day, August 3, 1950. “A glass for me and a cup for my wife! Mazel Tov! Congratulations!” Nuchem wanted to pay for the beer, but someone had quickly and deftly stolen the money from his

pocket. That was not uncommon in the Urals. I had to pay for it out of my stipend.

In Sverdlovsk there were several other families from Grodno who moved there during the First World War. Among them were the relatives of Wolf Ilyich, Dr. Soson with his wife who was a dentist, also from Grodno. They invited us over for dinner the following day. Their youngest son died during the war, the eldest son came back and lived with them. Kohn and he immediately found common ground. They were better off than Wolf Ilyich and gave me a wedding present – a pillow and bedsheets. That's our Grodno folk, they are like family. I left the Urals a rich bride. A down pillow cost a fortune at the time.

Wolf Ilyich and Sofia Petrovna didn't want me to leave the Urals. "You have so much promise, you can get your graduate degree here, and I will get your husband a job at our factory. Rovno is a tiny town, what are you going to do there?"

But Kohn didn't like the Urals, he decided to return to Rovno and left immediately after our "honeymoon." For the longest time our children didn't know that Wolf Ilyich and Sofia Petrovna were not their real grandparents. From the Urals, children received presents on birthdays and holidays. From Rovno, I sent grandfather and grandmother packages of ten kilos of juicy Antonovka apples. I chose solid ones, one by one. A package was in transit for two to three weeks. I wrapped each apple separately in a piece of paper. [I sent] other presents on holidays, and not only on holidays. At the pharmacy, I would get them imported medication that wasn't available in the Urals: anything they asked for. Wolf Ilyich died in 1971. He still received my present for the winter – a warm wool scarf, warm mittens, other trinkets and a bottle of good cognac for New Year. Sofia Petrovna died five years before him.

Before leaving for Canada, I went to Sverdlovsk with my eldest daughter to say goodbye to my compatriots, pay them my last respects. I visited their graves with my daughter, took a spade and cleaned up the grave of Wolf Ilyich. I got the management of the factory where he had worked his whole life to agree to set up a gravestone for him. I said goodbye to their kind souls. I asked a friend from my student years to

look after their graves, sent her all my financial bonds as a gift and sent her a package of clothes from Canada. She asked me not to send clothes anymore, fashion was different there. From Rovno, I sent my friend a package with winter flowers: you don't have to dig them up every year, they grow on their own in the spring and blossom. I also asked her to plant some on the graves of her parents, also from Belarus, refugees of World War II, like me. She and I are still in contact. She is a couple of years older than me, she can't see well, her daughter writes letters for her, they live together. I maintained contact with the Urals. As a farewell gift, Sofia Petrovna gave me a photo of her son and asked: "If you bear a son, call him Boris, to honour our perished son." I promised her that. I gave birth to two girls. I treasure the photo of Sofia Petrovna and Wolf Ilyich's son. It stood in a place of honour in our house in Rovno. I brought this photo here, to Montreal. And here this photograph stands in my house among my deceased relatives, in a place of honour. Their memories and shared grief united us.

Dedicated to My Husband

*On February 11, 2010,
you passed away.*

*You died in my arms
And I wept aloud,
My daughter came running, grandchildren
Flew in from America,
Sat down next to me – they loved their grandfather.
And something snapped in me –
You passed away.
For ten years I visited you in the hospital,
Fed you, drove you around,
I accepted my fate.*

*You were gravely ill
But still alive, you talked
To me. On the last night
You ate well, the doctor said to me:
It is marvelous,
How your husband fights for life!
And in the morning, you were no more –
I have no one left to feed and no one left
To visit. And I felt lonely and sorrowful.
On the following day
You were buried, so quickly,
I could barely stand on my feet.
Many people were there,
The news of your death
Spread quickly.
Veterans paid their last respects,
Honouring the hero
On his last journey,
And our faithful friend Vlasta,
Who was sick, came with her cane,
And brought her grandchildren,
And her son came to bid farewell to the hero.
Six years flew by so fast,
Friends did not forget the path to your grave,
And, following the custom, they put
rocks on your gravestone. Good people,
They remember the hero, they don't forget,
They write poems about you. Boris Petrovich Sidnev
made a film about you, to let everyone know
who was the people's Avenger – the scout Metek –
Nuchem Kohn.*

*Dedicated to My Husband,
Nuchem Kohn*

*It's spring again,
Snow melts slowly,
The sun brings light but no warmth,
Winter does not want to retreat.
Trees haven't yet put on
Their spring finery,
They grieve together with us:
"A hero passed away!"
The Tsuman forest remembers the hero:
"Oh yes! We remember, we don't forget."
And the grass remembers:
"Day and night I embraced and caressed
The wounded partisan."
A bird is building a nest,
Brightly sings a song about the hero,
Which touches the soul.
Only the ravens croak,
Making noise,
Bearing sad news.
"Why do you make noise? Go away!
I do not like your racket."*

*The hero loved spring...
The snow will melt, and the grass will raise
Its head from the earth
And will greet the hero:
"Good day!
You loved young grass,
And the smell of greenery,
And we treasured you,
Protected you from the fearsome enemy.*

*When you were wounded
And couldn't move,
You lay down in the grass under a tree,
I wept, God is my witness."*
*In the morning, the dew shed tears,
The bee fell quiet, silence all around.
We send the hero on his last journey,
The veterans salute him standing,
The grave is dug and already awaits.
Farewell, hero!*
*You fought courageously for freedom,
For your people, for the righteous cause –
For peace and happiness on Earth.
You will not die, you will live for centuries
In people's memory,
And we will remember you,
And write songs about you,
And children will sing these songs,
And grandchildren,
Your glory will not fade,
People do not forget
Such heroes as you...*



Grunia and Nuchem Kohn at Home

***In Loving Memory of Grunia's Husband
Nuchem Yakubovich Kohn***

On the memorable Victory Day!

*He was a brave partisan,
Went out for patrols many times,
According to the predetermined plan,
He reported the enemy's secrets.*

*Hard is a partisan's path –
The path of a scout is harder,
When in war-torn Europe
A Jew goes out on patrol.*

*Shoulder to shoulder with Kuznetsov,
On reconnaissance, knowing no barriers,
He was preparing graves for the enemies,
The country's unforgettable soldier.*

*Many were welcomed as heroes,
But as fate would have it,
Not everyone became a hero
In the common struggle.*

*You'll hear, you'll know, you'll see –
His wife, Grunia, is a poet,
Who writes in Yiddish
Poems of the glorious days.*

*All of this is in the past,
He deserves to be remembered,
So that people remember day and night
Who is Nuchem Yakubovich Kohn!!!*

Aleksandr Lyubman

Magical Lake

There is a small artificial magical lake in a quiet area of Montreal. The water there is so clear, transparent, you can see yourself as in a mirror. The waves in this lake caress you gently, embrace you, you feel as though you're in paradise. There, parts of different old watches rest, surrounding you so sweetly, reminding everyone: We served our lifetime. You, the young generation, came up with new watches. Old watch parts are no longer needed. The mechanism has changed.

The master was sorry to throw us out, he gathered us and spoke these words: "All your life you served me and fed me. I cannot throw you out, my heart does not allow me. I will send you to your rest. I created a magical lake. It's not large, you will be comfortable and warm there." He placed different watch parts there, taught them to swim, and there they now enjoy themselves. The master watches them in secret and rejoices. He tells no one about the creation of the magical wonder-lake, keeps silent, doesn't allow anyone to disturb their peace. What bliss to swim in the magical lake, to observe quietly one's own created wonder.

All old watch parts - arrows, pendulums - regained their youth. And pieces of glass shine like precious stones. So the master admires his creation. Even in advanced age, he managed to create a wonder. "Learn from me, young ones! I am ready to share my experience with you. You will not see such a wonder anywhere, even in dreams. Imagination, my dears, imagination and patience. God endowed me with talent. I am hardworking, I love creating something new, where old creations come to life, surprise us and do not die. Life goes on."

I will reveal to you the secret of who created this miracle out of old, useless spare watch parts, and suddenly showed his creation to me over the Internet. I was touched deeply. How much labour and imagination did Boris Petrovich Sidnev put into the creation of a masterpiece, how much time this modest, amiable man dedicated to creating such a fantastical wonder-lake.

P.S. How did Boris Petrovich acquire these parts?

After the death of my husband N. Kohn, I felt sorry about throwing out the outmoded spare parts for the watch that Kohn sometimes used when he had already retired. He was a master of his trade.

Back in 1942, in D. N. Medvedev's partisan squad, Kohn repaired the engraved watch which had belonged to an Aryan German and which was needed by the legendary intelligence agent N. I. Kuznetsov. Without this watch, Kuznetsov could not operate, could not prove that he is Aryan. Nobody in the city could fix them. At first Kohn refused, but Dmitry Nikolayevich Medvedev asked him in this way: "Think about it, I am not rushing you, however much time you might need."

"I'll try", replied Kohn and took up the work. Using a simple file, without instruments, he made a new pendulum, labouring over it all week. At first it didn't work, but Kohn kept working, until finally, the arrows moved. Kohn cried out with joy: "It's ticking!" At the time he didn't know Russian yet. Dmitry Nikolayevich hugged him and praised him. Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov was also delighted. I remembered this episode, inspired by the moving arrows and glass shards in a magical lake created by the hands of Boris Petrovich Sidnev, from the parts I gave him in memory of Kohn, thinking he might use them. And Boris Petrovich created such a wonder. Patience and labour create masterpieces.



The magical lake

War Veteran Sergei Safarov Is No More

Every year veterans of war would celebrate Victory Day in the cafe of Sergei Safarov's daughter, Violetta. It's a big job, preparing the holiday meal for all veterans and guests. Violetta tried to make this day special and pleasant for her father. She is a very devoted daughter, an excellent housekeeper, and she welcomed us veterans like family. Last year Sergei was already very ill, couldn't walk, saw badly. But on Victory Day he sat on the porch of Violetta's café, as always, and welcomed war veterans and guests.

Sergei Safarov was a very hardworking and talented person; an amateur artist, he created paintings that not every artist could. Some years ago, Sergei made copies of several of his paintings and gave them away on Victory Day to war veterans he knew, pointing out where they could get good, inexpensive frames. He wanted to give me a big framed painting, but I declined. "Leave it to your relatives as a memento." In advanced age, he bought a piano and played by ear. Sergei loved music and knew it well. He often played for me over the phone and asked: "Can you hear?" "I can hear, but it's already late, you will wake up the neighbours." "No problem, let them listen too, they'll sleep better for it", Sergei joked. At 90, his friend Misha, a war veteran, gave Sergei an accordion. Sergei started playing the accordion as well. He had such willpower! He received diplomas and Victory Day greetings from Putin, Harper, Kuchma and other state leaders.

Lately Sergei began to complain to me: "I cannot walk, my legs are hurting, I see badly, and my flowers already blossomed on the balcony, the prettiest in the whole building. Come look at them, I will pay for the taxi." "And you say that you can't see." "And how good they smell! Come over and see for yourself." He loved beauty and admired it.

Sergei prepared his own food, knew all prices for groceries, where you can get what for a reduced price. He would call me immediately: "Go get strawberries, they are very cheap today." Sergei's memory was perfect. He remembered the details of every battle during the war, often talked to me on the phone about everything for hours, until I would say: "It's late already, Sergei, we'll continue tomorrow." Sergei would wish me good night, "Bonne Nuit;" sometimes he added German, knowing that I used to be a German language teacher.

So we used to talk until eleven or twelve at night. He was a welcoming and generous person. He was good at everything he took up. He did everything with love. He loved spending time in the garden and gathered an abundant harvest. You could learn much from him. And during the war he showed himself worthy, was severely wounded. Twenty-four military awards bear witness to that. We stayed friends till the end. We will all miss him very much.



**Victory Day at Violetta's Cafe.
May 10, 2013**



**Sergei Safarov, on the left – Misha, on the right –
Grunia, Sergei Safarov's friends.**

**P.S. Sergei Safarov passed away on February 20, 2016.
On March 1, he would have turned 95.**

The Wedding Dress

In an English-language newspaper I read an article about the wedding dress of Lilly Friedman at the Bergen-Belsen displaced persons camp in 1946. Her groom, a tall young man of twenty-one, who, like her, had survived the death camps, worked at the time in the food distribution centre, and traded a former German pilot two pounds of coffee and several cigarette packs for a useless parachute, all because his bride Lilly wanted so much to have a wedding dress. Out of this parachute, the seamstress sewed a long dress with sleeves and a round collar for Lilly, and from the scraps a wedding shirt for the groom. This dress is now located in the Bergen-Belsen museum. Many young brides who had survived the death camps wore Lilly's dress to their weddings after the war. They were also staying in the displaced persons camp. I was touched by this story, happy for Lilly, for the girls who

survived and also got to wear this dress on their wedding day, and I remembered my own wedding.

I got married in the Soviet Union, in Sverdlovsk, in the Urals, on August 3, 1950, and I didn't even dream of a wedding dress. It was a difficult post-war time. I had just graduated from college and still lived in the dormitory. No money, no parents, no relatives – everyone had died. Where could I, a poor girl, get a wedding dress? I didn't even dream of it. The groom had no wedding suit either, just trousers and a shirt. What's more, on the way from Moscow to Sverdlovsk he nodded off, and all his money got stolen from his pocket. He came with empty hands. There was only my stipend for the whole wedding celebration. Nuchem stayed with my acquaintances. Boys were not allowed to come into the dorm, and definitely not to sleep in girls' rooms. We went to the marriage registration office, they gave us a paper with a stamp confirming that we are married, and - goodbye, who's next? My compatriot's wife prepared a modest dinner for us and invited a young couple with whom they shared an apartment for a cup of tea. They brought us a gift – two cups and two saucers. I treasured this souvenir all these years and took it with me to Canada, but one cup and a saucer broke in the luggage. In Canada, Rabbi Sirota organized a wedding for the elderly from the former Soviet Union. I didn't go to this wedding. There was a lot of noise. I don't like noise, and I asked the President of the Anshei Ozeroff Synagogue, Meyer Kobritz, whether it was possible to have a ceremony following the Jewish custom and with only two witnesses, quietly. We are no longer young, we already have grandchildren. I didn't want to have anyone else at this ceremony.

October 25, 1998 was a wonderful evening. There were many stars in the sky, the two of us went to a synagogue, did not breathe a word to anyone. We were already expected there. "Look, Nuchem, how many stars there are in the sky, they accompany us and will be our witnesses." I bought a bottle of Kosher wine and a cake, we needed to thank the witnesses, after all. But President Hel's wife prepared a good dinner for us. The president and his wife congratulated us after the ceremony, invited us to their house, and we dined together.

Forty years after I got married in Sverdlovsk, I got married a second time. This time I didn't have a wedding dress either, unlike Lilly. We were happy with a ceremony following the Jewish custom, according to which our parents were married, our grandmothers and grandfathers, our ancestors, but without any noise.

Mayakovsky's Flowers

As students, we knew everything about Vladimir Mayakovsky's love for Lilya Brik. But about his love for the Russian émigré Tatyana Yakovleva in Paris, I learned in Montreal. Mayakovsky didn't succeed. She was not moved by his devotion or by his fame. He frightened her with his uncontrollable passion. She did not appreciate the rude Soviet poet, she was an aristocrat, brought up on the oeuvres of Pushkin and Tyutchev. And nevertheless, Mayakovsky took the whole honorarium from his Paris performances and put it in a bank, in the account of a famous Parisian flower firm, under the condition that several times a week they would deliver a bouquet of the most beautiful and unusual flowers to Tatyana Yakovleva. Mayakovsky passed away in 1930, but the flower deliveries continued. During the Second World War, these flowers saved Tatyana Yakovleva's life under the German occupation of Paris. She sold them on the boulevard. Even after the war, for many years they delivered flowers "from Mayakovsky" to the elderly Tatyana Yakovleva, already grey-haired. Not every man could be so generous, especially since she rejected him and didn't follow him to Moscow. Love knows no boundaries.

I remembered a devoted friend from my student years who was in love with me and whom I rejected. His unconditional love continued all his life. He did not hide his feelings. His whole family knew about it: mother, sister, the sister's son. My husband also knew about my admirer. He would send me and my family greetings on every holiday and on my birthday. Before my marriage, in Sverdlovsk, I would often get flowers from him - not as expensive as the ones Tatyana Yakovleva received in Paris, but beautiful, simple

Ural flowers, full of love. He delivered the flowers himself, with a besotted smile, and all the students in the dorm looked at us and smiled. They often reminded me: “Your admirer is already waiting for you with flowers.” Where he got these flowers, I don’t know. The concierge didn’t allow boys into the dorms, that was the law after the war. He stood outside in any weather and waited.

Sasha graduated from college before I did and wanted to marry immediately, so that I would go with him to his assigned location. I didn’t agree, I wanted to graduate from college and receive a diploma first, then get married. He left on his own and lived on the modest salary of a Soviet engineer. My admirer did not receive a big honorarium like Mayakovsky, nevertheless I often received flowers from him.

Our paths diverged. For many years I didn’t see him, but he was in contact with a friend of mine and found out all my news from her. He was interested in everything. Hearing that my first book was ready for publication, he sent me a cheque from his modest salary. I thanked him, but I returned that cheque to him. Apart from flowers, I never accepted any presents from him and did not want to be indebted to any of my admirers. I sent the book to his sister, she had asked for it. In Sasha’s family I was known not as “Sasha’s friend” but as “Sasha’s fiancée.” They did not hold it against me, they understood – I wanted to finish college, receive a diploma, and only then start sorting out my personal life, since I was left alone after the war and had no one to rely on. In the Soviet Union it was impossible to survive on one salary. Sasha should not have pressured me so much, shouldn’t have rushed me, he could have waited.

We didn’t see each other for over twenty-five years. Much has changed during these years. My friend left for Israel, Sasha’s family and he himself also went to Israel. Sasha lived alone in Tel-Aviv, worked as an engineer. My husband and I came from Canada for our youngest daughter’s wedding and were staying with my husband’s compatriot in Givatayim, near Tel-Aviv. Our daughter lived in a dorm in Jerusalem, and her wedding occurred in Jerusalem two days before Christmas. Sasha congratulated us. Hearing that my husband fell ill, he drove to Netanya late

at night to get medicine from his sister. Sasha's sister was a doctor. Late at night, he brought medicine for Nuchem. Sasha gave a beautiful wedding gift to my daughter, congratulated her and said: "I am proud that I have been a friend of your mother's. You could have been my daughter, but it's not meant to be." My daughter smiled. When he left, she said to me: "Mom, he is still in love with you." "We just stayed friends."

Sasha died in 2013. For a long time, Sasha's sister didn't tell me that Sasha passed away. For the last few years he lived with her. I found out about it two years later, by chance. In memory of him, his sister and her son keep in touch with me, send holiday wishes. When I was in the hospital, his sister's son called me. "Mom is worried, called several times, nobody picks up." Anything can happen in life...

Doctor and Professor Henrich Gleser

On March 15, 1997, unexpectedly for us all, doctor and professor Henrich Gleser passed away. It's hard to believe that twenty years already passed by. We were friends, understood each other without words, saw each other often. On the day before his death, he called me and told me about his plans. He was rushing to finish his eighteenth book and send it to Moscow for publication. I wished him success. And then the life of an extraordinary person, a scholar, an exceptional family man and a friend of our family, was cut short. He stood out among the Russian immigrants from the first day of his arrival in Canada. Tall, slim, with thick black and silvery hair, always neatly and tastefully dressed.

Henrich Abramovich was born in August 1925, in Kirovograd, Ukraine. Henrich's father was an engineer from Grodno. He was proud of his father and often said: "I am a Litvak." Hearing that I was also born in Grodno, he was enthusiastic. We talked often, called each other, met once a week in the Centre for Russian-Speaking Jews, where Israel Sirota told us about Jewish holidays, Jewish customs, and I translated the news of the week from different sources into Russian. We often met at our house. Henrich Abramovich

was interested in everything, wanted to know everything. At every lecture, he took notes, wrote things down, asked questions. He often supplemented my information with medical news. He was a modest, honest, kind-hearted man, very hard-working. From the age of sixteen, he began his working life as a humble construction worker. At the beginning of the war, Henrich found himself in Uzbekistan with his mother and younger brother. He finished grade school there and at seventeen joined the army as a volunteer. At first he was a soldier, then a paramedic of his battalion, with which he walked through all of Poland and reached the Oder. Once there, he was severely wounded, had a concussion and received a personal pension at the age of twenty. For his heroic feats, he was awarded the Order of the Red Star, the Order of the Patriotic War of the 1st class, and many medals.

In 1945 Henrich married a childhood friend, with whom he lived on the same street, studied in the same school and the same class. Together they got into the Odessa Medical College and graduated from it in 1950.

After graduation, the young doctor Henrich Abramovich worked in the countryside, together with his wife. Henrich carried out the responsibilities of the Head of the District Health Department. In those times, it was difficult to live and work in the countryside, especially with a small child. Henrich and his wife worked in the village district hospital for three years and didn't complain, he and his wife bravely endured all the difficulties.

Later Henrich defended his candidate's dissertation on the role of functional vascular disorders in IHD under the supervision of Professor P. E. Lukomsky. Dr. Gleser was a research fellow in the Institute of Therapy (Cardiology) of the Academy of Medical Sciences of the USSR, and from 1978, the head of the Laboratory of Pharmaceutical Nephrology of the Research Institute for the Biological Testing of Chemical Compounds of the Ministry of Health care.

In 1964, under the supervision of A. L. Myasnikov, he defended his doctoral dissertation on hemodynamic disturbances in various forms of arterial hypertension. H. A. Gleser's later research was dedicated to studying the blood circulation in healthy people of different gender, age, degree

of physical training, under the influence of high temperatures in the environment, physical activity, upright position, pregnancy. Henrich Abramovich Gleser demonstrated the possibility of using weighted samples to diagnose kidney functioning in healthy people, athletes, in cases of various pathologies and under the influence of medication. He was the first in the Soviet Union to develop and implement treatment methods for severe kidney damage using peritoneal and intestinal dialysis, the drainage of a thoracic duct.

Twenty dissertations were defended under the supervision of H. A. Gleser. He published over 250 works, including 18 books. His reference books on pharmacotherapy of cardiovascular diseases were positively evaluated by doctors.

Henrich Abramovich Gleser attached great value to popularizing the achievements of medical science. He published a series of brochures on the prevention and treatment of diseases of the cardiovascular system and kidneys. He was a member of the English-language Medical Research Society and was published in the Cardiology Journal.

For several years, H. A. Gleser worked in Congo with an international delegation of doctors who aided in the restoration of healthcare in the Congo in the time of Patrice Lumumba. He was Lumumba's private doctor, and later met with Lumumba's family in Moscow several times. Among Gleser's patients were Aleksandr Petrovich Aleksandrov, Sidorenko, the Minister of Geology, Khrushchev's son-in-law. Henrich Abramovich corresponded with Khrushchev's son, Professor Sergei Khrushchev, and many others. But most important, as his grandson Slavik emphasizes, was the human quality of Henrich Abramovich, which is not something many scientists can incorporate. He remained the head of his family until the last days of his life. "I spent every weekend with Grandfather. This gave me a lot, a lot of practical medical knowledge before I entered the medical college. Grandfather took me with him to see patients, explained things, instilled in me an interest not only towards medicine."

Henrich Abramovich collected stamps, coins, Valday bells. He loved art, visited art exhibits and here, in Montreal, spent whole days in the McGill library, in the Jewish Public Library and other city libraries. He published his articles on medical subjects in *Vesti, Novoe Russkoe Slovo* and other newspapers. Upon his grandson's arrival from Moscow, he involved Slavik in his research. Together they published a whole series of interesting articles. Henrich Abramovich also gave much attention to his younger grandson, Timochka, as his grandparents tenderly called him. Dr. Gleser also gave talks on the radio (on a Russian program), shared his knowledge, gave advice to all who turned to him.

Henrich Abramovich also appreciated my poetry. He always asked to read "something new", was a connoisseur of poetry and literature in general. "It's a pity that not many people understand your poetry, don't know the Jewish language. Send the poems to Moscow, there will be people who will want to translate them into Russian. Create a line-by-line translation." Dr. Gleser cared not only for his own family, but for the members of his friends' families. I received a lot of useful advice from Henrich Abramovich. He will be missed not only by his wife, his daughters and grandchildren, but also by his friends, and by me in particular.

The Call of the Lake

In 1965, the poet Andrei Voznesensky did a reading of his poems in one of the garrisons of the Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast. After the performance, he was invited to go fishing by the event's organizer. Once there, one of the people present told the story that this lake hadn't been there before, but instead there used to be a large deep ravine. In 1942, German fascists, with the help of local volunteers, drove the Jews from the ghetto into the ravine and shot them all. To hide the evidence of their crime, the Germans flooded the ravine with water. "And the fish are so plentiful here!"

Shaken by this story, the poet Voznesensky wrote a poem entitled "The Call of the Lake", which he published in the county war-themed newspaper. Several years later,

Voznesensky published the poem “The Ditch” – a curse for the villains who dug a ditch near Simferopol, where 12,000 Jews were shot, and used pliers to extract gold teeth and crowns from the corpses. In Rovno and Rovno Oblast this happened after the war as well.

One hundred thousand Lithuanian Jews, refugees from Poland and other cities, perished in Ponary, near Vilnius. Back in 1943, the fascists drove eighty-three prisoners in there, bound their feet with shackles and forced them to dig up corpses, extract gold teeth from them, then burn the corpses to hide the evidence. The gold they sent to Berlin. I wrote about this in my tenth book, *Twentieth Century*, and I now translated into English the memoirs of Shlomo Gol, who managed to dig a tunnel and escape together with a captive Russian officer. Only thirteen people survived.

All over Ukraine, wherever fascists appeared, they found local volunteers who wanted to kill and rob Jews. The whole of Ukraine was turned into a Jewish cemetery, and dead Jews weren’t left alone either. Unknown graves of murdered Jews are still being discovered. The French Orthodox Father Desbois, with the help of volunteers, discovered 850 graves in Ukrainian villages where about 2,000,000 Jews were shot. I was present at Father Desbois’s talk in Montreal, where he was invited by the late David Azrieli and where he showed a documentary. Fascists threw the two-year-old daughter of our friend Aleksandr Filyuk, the well-known partisan, into a ditch and buried her alive – their own neighbours gave her away. Her grandfather, an old man, Filyuk’s wife’s father, was shot in the same ditch.

I have no words to honour you the way you deserve, poet Andrei Voznesensky, no words to honour your delicate, noble soul. It was not by chance that you were loved so much. Your fame spread far around the world and reached God himself, and you will have a well-deserved place in Heaven. Your touching and sincere words will resound, even after we are gone, in future generations: “Forgive me, curse me, but answer me something...” you address the fish. “The fish replied nothing. Silence.” (“The Call of the Lake”, 1965).

Blood is not like water! It boils, calling on every decent person to feel indignation, awakens conscience.

On the eve of the demise of the last defenders of the Warsaw ghetto, I want to remind all those who hate Jews, wherever they are, that sooner or later God's punishment awaits them. The insatiable murderers must know that honest, decent people in the world remember the blood of innocent victims that was shed, and they will not forgive. Blood does not stay silent, it calls, awakens people's conscience, urges them to fight for peace, to avoid war, to punish criminals. Our veterans are indignant: "We took peace by fighting for all people, so live in peace, don't allow war from now on! We would not forgive you for it!"

**War Veteran,
Grunia Slutzky-Kohn**

The Festival

In our city of Rovno, there was a festival for students of all schools that took place every year. Every school had its own choir, its own soloists and its own speakers. Since 1951, I worked in Rovno, in a Ukrainian school for boys, and at the same time in a Russian school. In 1955 we decided to prepare a concert for parents, “Learn Foreign Languages“, in German, English and French, accompanied by a Russian translation. I was responsible for organizing that event. The event took place on March 3, 1955, in honour of International Women’s Day. We prepared to congratulate our moms in three languages, with translations into Russian. We made humble little gifts and with ceremony presented them to our moms.

I suggested we could stage a poem by a famous German poet Heinrich Heine, “Lorelei.” I chose a beautiful girl from tenth grade who had long hair and a good voice.

“You’ll be Lorelei.” We sewed her a long white dress out of gauze. We had trouble obtaining gauze. At the time, everything was hard to obtain. I chose the songs and rehearsed them with her for a long time. “Where do I get a fisherman’s costume and stage props?” the pupil who played the fisherman asked me. “Let’s ask the theatre director to lend us costumes and decorations for one night.” Everyone agreed.

And so the delegation of tenth grade students of the Ukrainian school, together with me, marched into the theatre to see the director. The director listened to us and said: “How can I refuse anything to young talents?” “And where do I get the fish?” - the “fisherman” asked me. “You’re the fisherman, so supply the fish. Take fishing rods, catch a few fishes in the river, put them in a jar with some water. Not a word to anyone! Under the stage there will be a student, sitting and waiting for my signal. When I nod my head, he will quickly attach the fish to the line. And when you catch a live fish from the Rhine, this will produce a great effect.

On the day of the concert all the performers gathered a few hours in advance. Everyone showed their costume to me and read their lines. I made some last remarks to them. I asked the prompter not to stick his head out too much. I am the director, after all. Good luck! I encouraged my troupe. There were parents and many guests, the auditorium was crowded. It was the first time an event like this had taken place in Rovno. The audience fell very quiet. Nobody recognized the fisherman, because he was made up. As soon as I nodded my head and the fisherman caught a live fish from the Rhine, all students in the first rows jumped up from their seats: "Live fish! Live fish!" I could barely hold them back from coming too close to the stage. The mermaid made a big impression as well. She swam slowly out of the depths of the Rhine, sat on a high rock, brushed her long hair with a golden comb and sang. We made some stairs and attached them, so the mermaid didn't fall off when she swam out of the Rhine. And we made the rock steady, worked so hard. At first the mermaid sang quietly, then louder and louder. The lighting was remarkable. From all directions came the cries: "Bravo!" "Bravo!" All participants were photographed in costume. The concert was a huge success. I congratulated our performers on their success and thanked the guests who had come to the event and had warmly welcomed all the performers. The director of the Ukrainian school congratulated me, everyone was in high spirits.

After the concert, we took all the costumes and decorations back to the theatre, and presented the director of the theatre with some live fish from the river Rhine. Everyone remembered that night for a long, long time.

When I came home, I walked up to the crib where my little daughter slept soundly and kissed her: "Sleep, dear one. Let your youth be brighter than mine." Children are not responsible for the actions of their parents, they are not to blame. I stayed with them after class, gave them additional lessons, prepared them for exams. The tense atmosphere around the children of the Banderites gradually disappeared, they saw that I was trying to help them.

You're a teacher, Grunia. I was the first Jewish teacher in the Ukrainian school in ten years. From 1941 till

1951 they had no Jewish teacher. For Easter, they brought me blessed *babka* bread. This was prohibited in the Soviet Union. I didn't want to hurt the feelings of their mothers or their grandmothers. I could not take anything home, or I would get fired. At the time, children had to be educated in the Communist spirit.

“My thanks to all your grandmothers and mothers. Close the doors! I can't eat all of this alone. Let's all taste every *babka*.” We asked the canteen to lend us a knife for a minute, I cut up all the *kalachs* and the *babkas* into thirty-three parts. Everyone got a piece, and during the long break everyone sat in the classroom, letting nobody else come in, and enjoyed the holiday *babkas* that had been blessed in the church. “Which one did you like most?” they asked me. “All of them are very tasty. Send your grandmothers and your mothers a big thank you from me.” Everyone was very satisfied. I did not offend anyone, I sat and ate together with them. Their feelings to me warmed up, there were no more inimical, mistrustful stares. They started to treat me with respect, shared their grudges, trusted me. I was invited to weddings, asked to honour them and come to funerals. Much depends on education. My thoughts rushed back to my lost youth, my family and relatives, friends that perished, murdered innocent children, my generation that perished in death camps, and I could not fall asleep for a long, long time.



Grunia Slutzky is in the second row, fourth from the left.

We Must Not Forget!

I often remember the words of Boris Konstantinovich Pytallo, director of the military workshop in Seversk, Sverdlovsk Oblast, where I worked in 1942, during the war: “You’re a good girl, Grunia - honest, hard-working – but, my daughter, your life will be hard.”

True, I have not had an easy life. “Truth will get you hurt” - and nevertheless I fought for truth all my life. I have been a member of the community of Russian-speaking Jews in Montreal for over forty years, I spent many years as the first secretary of this association. On November 12, 2015, I spoke at the Russian club, telling the story of the founding of the association of Russian Jews in Quebec. The audience listened to me very attentively. My late husband Nuchem Kohn and I were very active in this community. We were all very close, and I hope that this tradition will be continued by new members of the committee. Before Victory Day, I would like to tell the new members of the committee about one of the first members of the committee, Nuchem Kohn, for you did not know him. Many members of the first committee are no longer among the living, neither are many war veterans.

Nuchem Kohn was a partisan scout, an orderly of the legendary intelligence agent Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov. For a year he worked disguised as a Pole, Mechislav Kovalski, or “Metek”, as former partisans and all of us called him after the war. Every day he reported important information to Kuznetsov, and Kuznetsov reported it to the leadership of the special squad of D. N. Medvedev. Kohn risked his life every minute, since he could be recognized. He performed a vital task for the head of reconnaissance of the squad.

In December 1980, at the Jewish Congress, there was an event dedicated to Nuchem Kohn’s book *"The Voice from the Forest"* (Memories of a Jewish Partisan).

Paul Trepman, former director of the Jewish Public Library, warmly congratulated the author:

“Among us lives a hero in the full sense of this word, whom other nations would praise and in whose honour they would set up monuments. But here he stands between us unnoticed, lives calmly somewhere in Montreal. So I want to

tell you: Nuchem Kohn, we were all enriched by your actions against Hitlerism.” The writer Khaim Shpilberg, originally from the Kolki Shtetl, wrote in the *Kanadskiy Orel* newspaper: “In the very beginning of the book, Nuchem Kohn writes: ‘I will tell you about how the whole world went mad, humans turned into animals, human life became meaningless, and the forest became home.’ Much was written about this book in Jewish and English-language press.”

Douglas Tottle, editor of *Outlook* magazine, ran into some Ukrainian tourists from Rovno in Vancouver and talked to them. The tourists spoke very warmly about “Metek” - Kohn. (Everyone in Rovno called him “Metek”). They said that they knew him personally. “He is a hero, he is remembered in Rovno.” “Nuchem Kohn and other Jewish partisans proved to the world that Jews did not go to their deaths like sheep to slaughter”, wrote Douglas Tottle in October, 1989. The journalist Jacob Rabinovich, originally from Vilnius, called Nuchem Kohn “the modern-day Bar Kokhba” (a Jewish leader in the rebellion against the Romans).

Nuchem unexpectedly received a letter from Los Angeles, from a young student named Phil Tsukerman, aged nineteen. “I have read many books about the murder of Eastern European Jews, but your book is full of courage, hope and justice. I want to thank you from my heart for writing this book. It showed me that young boys my age gave their lives to stop the fascist murderers. Your book helped me learn the truth about the Holocaust. You are a great hero.

Thank you for your book. I hope that young people will be always reading it.”

Nuchem laboured over the book for three years, but declined the honorarium, leaving his memories to the future generations as a selfless gift. The Soviet government valued Nuchem Kohn’s achievements and awarded him with many medals. In 1972, the Soviet Committee of War Veterans invited Nuchem Kohn to Moscow with a group of former partisans of the city of Rovno, even though they knew that Kohn had made a request for him and his family to be allowed to emigrate to Canada. And here, in Montreal, the Russian Consul General congratulated Nuchem every year on

Victory Day, invited him to the General Consulate of Russia to celebrate Victory Day on May 9. In 2000, Kohn was awarded the memorial medal of General Zhukov. This medal was awarded to him by the Russian Consul General, Igor Lebedev, when he was already in the hospital.

For a year, he risked his own life every minute. He could be recognized and turned over to the Germans. The Ukrainians knew the watchmaker from Lutsk. Fascists promised ten kilos of salt, which was in short supply at the time, for bringing Kohn to them alive, and five kilos of salt for bringing him dead.

Without Kohn's help, Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov would not have been able to operate with such success. War veterans in Montreal knew and respected Kuznetsov's orderly. Such heroes should not be forgotten. The young generation should learn courage and heroism from war veterans, should be proud of them. Patriotism, love for Motherland must be taught with the examples of war heroes. Without patriotism, without love for Motherland, it would be impossible to conquer such a powerful enemy, armed to its teeth. In our community, there were many heroes, veterans of war. The community should be proud of them. Community leaders must tell the young about them. The young know nothing about them. They know nothing of such heroes as Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov, and of the heroes that lived next door to us. Millions of our young brothers and fathers, our grandfathers sacrificed their lives so that future generations can live in peace, be spared from knowing the terrors of war like we knew them. This worries me very much.

You never know what can happen. My generation made plans for the future, and in a couple of days all our plans crumbled. The war began unexpectedly, carried off our relatives and friends. Millions of children were orphaned, millions of widows were left. God forbid war happens again. This time, it will be atomic war. Many more people will die. I went through all the horrors of war, lost my whole family, was left alone, and I don't want the young generation to experience the same thing. Many believe that we shouldn't tell children about war. That is misguided, children want to know! I gave talks in front of students of English schools,

French schools. Hannah Sirota invited me to speak before girls in a faith-based school. Everyone listened attentively, asked questions. The future generation must know about war heroes, learn courage and bravery from their examples.

I was convinced yet again that children want to know more about the war, about the difficulties of my generation in the war years, on May 14, 2016, when I spoke at the Russian school Gramota. I was their age during the war, after all. Children asked many questions. I told them about the legendary intelligence agent N. I. Kuznetsov, about Kuznetsov's orderly, my husband. Immediately one boy asked the question: "What is an orderly?" On the screen, we put up the photo of N. I. Kuznetsov's orderly, Nuchem, and the teacher, Tatyana Arkadyevna Rozinskaya, said: "And this is the husband of Grunia Yakovlevna." I explained to the children what an orderly is. Children kept asking questions, they were interested in everything.

I must acknowledge the teacher, Tatyana Arkadyevna Rozinskaya, and the director of the Gramota school, Tatyana Evseyevna Kruglikova. Everything was thought through, down to the smallest detail. The children were well-prepared for this meeting, they behaved very well and listened to me attentively. In the end, they took a picture with me, thanked me for the performance and offered me flowers. There were several of us war veterans. We spoke in different classes. After the talk, we were treated to tea, coffee and delicious pies, then thanked once more and given rides home. I was deeply touched by this meeting, by these remarkable children of the Russian school Gramota, who are our future. As a farewell, I expressed my wish that they never experience the horrors of war and the need to fight for peace.



May 14, 2016, meeting the children of the Gramota school.



May 14, 2016, the Gramota school. Grigory Arkadyevich Britva and Grunia Slutzky-Kohn.

Our Unwavering Ones.....

After celebrating the Day of the Great Victory, the Gramota school invited veterans who live in Montreal to meet the children and tell them about the glorious pages of history of Russia, where we all actually come from. The dear guests arrived with all their medals, and were happy to spend some time with the younger generation.

Grunia Slutzky-Kohn was a guest in one of the classes. She looked simply wonderful and differed so little from her own photograph taken during the war, that even the children noticed it.

Talking to contemporary children who live in Canada about the war is no easy task. Many concepts from those years are simply unknown to them: for example, Grunia Yakovlevna's husband was an orderly, and children simply did not know what it is. It was necessary to explain it and tell them about it – but at least one couldn't complain about the lack of attention.

However formal this may sound, children were actually holding their breath as they listened to Grunia. In a prosperous land of plenty, it is strange to hear the tale of a young girl who had to get up at the break of dawn and work in the factory, producing ammunition for the front and the Victory. Even adults may have a hard time believing them. However, it's likely that it is easier for children to believe the stories, since their feelings are more flexible. And, judging by their faces, they were far from taking the story, accompanied by a presentation and photographs, to be some sort of fairy tale.

After Grunia Yakovlevna finished speaking (by the way, she spent the whole meeting on her feet, despite her age; it's nice to see such respect for the audience, but the whole time we felt uncomfortable because we, by contrast, were seated!), the children started asking questions. The very number of questions demonstrated how much they were interested in what they had heard. The questions were, surprisingly, concrete. For example: "Do you remember the day when war began?" "Do you remember what you received all these

orders for?” “Did they scold you at the factory if you did something wrong?” and even “And how old are you?” The last question, slightly risky from the perspective of commonly held behavioural norms, was bypassed with purely feminine grace and humour; Grunia didn’t even hint that the children shouldn’t ask such things, but said that she had never been interested in how old anybody was, because that’s not the point.

We barely had enough time during the lesson, there were so many questions. When the bell finally rang, the children gave flowers to Grunia Slutzky-Kohn. The meeting clearly turned out to be mutually enriching: the guest looked with pleasure upon the young faces of those for whose sake the tragedy of the Great Patriotic War was overcome. As for the kids, it was especially useful for them to partake of the courage, wisdom and memory of those remarkable times. In addition to hearing an interesting story, children were also learning how to communicate and hold a conversation. In Grunia Yakovlevna’s very demeanour, in her manners, there was so much good taste, self-respect, true humility and attention to the children, that even this alone was a great example for them! It’s not by accident that they fell so quiet – they sensed something unusual, real, deep.

It’s a blessing that our children don’t fully understand what war and famine are like. We should hope that they will never understand that. But it’s very good if they can learn to understand the great importance of history, including the history of the country whose language they speak and use in their studies at Gramota, if they can personally meet those who created that history. In early May, when Victory Day is celebrated, Gramota provides them with such an opportunity.

Tatyana Kosova,
Teacher of Literature at the Gramota school.

Great-grandmother

*Wonder of wonders,
I became a great-grandmother.
Turned around and
Acquired a great-granddaughter.
Grandchildren married young
While they were still in college.
I celebrated two weddings and
I did not have to wait long:
The first “guest” arrived,
Gregory had a daughter.
The girl is a wonder to behold.
His brother didn’t want to lag behind.
He, too, had a daughter.
Gentle, beautiful,
Very-very sweet.
What a joy!
Congratulations! Congratulations!
I invite friends over,
Pour everyone wine.
There is whisky, there is vodka,
And the zakuska is not bad either:
Marinated herring,
Vinaigrette, salads,
Stuffed fish and
Fish in tomato sauce.
Siberian pelmeni,
Simply delicious.
Baked and boiled dishes, also pizza,
And a dessert table, tea and coffee.
Eat and drink to your health!
We prepared everything ourselves,
Grandchildren also helped, good job!
My grandchildren are twins and they are handsome.
Great-granddaughters took after their fathers.
I got so rich, I acquired two princesses.*

*“Soon we’ll start walking,
We’ll come visit you,
Wait for us, Baba Grunia.”
“I will be very glad, you are my best reward.
I will sing you a song and teach you to read,
Compose poems for you, when you learn to read.”
Dreams, dreams, dreams, but maybe not just dreams -
They will take after their grandmother,
Great-granddaughters will write poems themselves ...
On November 12, 2015,
I became a great-grandmother.*

Don’t Regret!

*No days lived in vain – don’t regret!
No faithful friends left – don’t regret!
You had them all.
Few sunny days are left on your path – don’t regret!
You had enough.
Gone is the one who loved you so much and caused you
deep pain– don’t regret! It was not meant to be.
There remain many graves of those friends who
sincerely loved you, treasured you and were proud of
you, inspired you in hard times, rejoiced in your fortune,
asking nothing in return. No days lived in vain –
don’t regret!
In your life you experienced light and darkness,
Good and bad, cold and warmth,
Luck and misfortune, hunger and pleasure.
Ural, you rarely warmed my aching soul.
But there were also happy moments that I cannot forget.
I would give everything for these rare moments –
so deeply have they been stored in my memory.
A lonely, hungry, freezing girl found herself
unexpectedly in the Sverdlovsk Opera Theatre,
Heard the opera Carmen for the first time. Music gave
strength to my imagination, what a performance!
And I forgot that far from here, war is raging
And people die, with no news of their dear ones,*

*Hunger in the pit of the stomach, knees blue from cold.
 I forgot everything in that moment.
 It was a cold winter, the year 1943. Thank you, Ural.
 You saw envy and respect,
 Hatred (don't know what for) and amazement,
 Unconditional love until death. Many fought for your
 hand,
 But to give everything up halfway, before reaching your
 goal, You didn't want.
 You were honest and truthful, studied hard,
 Worked, reaching for light, for knowledge,
 You achieved everything through hard work, you
 attained your goal –
 You were one of the best students – such satisfaction!
 In such difficult conditions you finished college,
 Received your diploma – an unforgettable moment.
 Thank you, Belinsky Library:
 How much knowledge I acquired in your walls!
 Ural museums taught me to see and value beauty.
 Everything that is the best in me I owe to you, Ural.
 It does not matter what I wore, how much I starved,
 froze and suffered.
 My soul was warmed by what I achieved,
 I did not seek material gain.
 Ural, you opened for me the doors of knowledge, of light.
 I would read at night, I learned a lot.
 You are severe, Ural. For ten hard years you tried
 And tempered me. I survived, I remained standing.
 Walking through this difficult life, I swallowed a lot of
 injustice and grief – God is my witness.
 I wasn't avenging meanness and injuries, only proved
 I AM A PERSON.
 What willpower this girl has! – everyone was surprised.
 You sowed seeds of good, and it came back to you.
 God Himself protects you, gives you long life,
 Rewards you for good, saves you from enemies.
 It's a sin to complain.*

*No days lived in vain – don't regret!
Every day teaches you something...
Thank you, God, You gave me strength.
I have no envy. I don't complain about my fate,
Don't want to trade with anyone.
I ask YOU one thing: I don't want to lose my mind.
I forgive my enemies, I have no hatred for people.
And when my hour comes, I will leave this world,
wishing everyone well.*

December 2013

Poetry for Children

**Children are our future,
I dedicate this to you, children.**

Summer Approaches

***Summer approaches,
Earth is warmed by the sun,
Rain pours down,
Washes the dust off the road,
Birds sing songs.
The old and the young love summer –
There is much sun, light and warmth.
We wait for you, summer, we wait!
There is such beauty in the summer:
Trees get dressed up,
Green leaves decorate them.
Everywhere bushes go green,
Earth is covered with grass.
Little kids' cheeks
Flush with delight, and they sing:
Hello to you, summer, hello!
Our grandmothers cheered up,
Started singing olden songs.
How good that you came,
Wondrous time, how good!***

May 2015

Flowers

*I planted flowers in the garden,
When they grow, I will give them to Mommy.
Every day I water them
And observe the patch.
First sprouts appeared,
So tender.
I will wait a bit,
And on her Birthday
I will give the flowers to Mommy.
I will write in the card:
“You are the best Mommy
in the world, all the kids
in my class love you.”*

April 2, 2016

I Love Reading Fairy Tales

*Mommy taught Tanya to read fairy tales,
But her little brother Vitya wants to play outside.
Brother Vitya started crying:
I am still little,
I can't read, I can't build
a little house by myself.
You always used to play with me,
helped me build a house,
but today you don't want
to play or walk outside,
to help me build a house.
Why?
I love reading fairy tales.
Little brother, my dearest, don't cry,
You'll grow up a bit, and Mommy
Will teach you to read fairy tales.*

December 2015

Children, Do You Know How to Cross the Road?

*Traffic in the city is heavy,
Everyone is rushing: faster, faster!
There is a rule for all people
And you, children, must know
How to cross the road.
Red light – stop!
Yellow light – wait!
Green light – you can cross the road.
Don't forget this rule, children!*

*Alright, Lenya, repeat!
The bus will drop me off
And pick me up from school.
Don't joke about this, Lenya,
And write it in your diary!*

*Repeat everything, children!
Red light – stop!
Yellow light – wait!
Green light – you can cross!
Good job!*

Porridge

*Our Masha doesn't like
To eat porridge in the morning.
Masha loves cottage cheese,
A piece of fresh bread,
Warm milk –
That's her best food.
And Vaska the Kitten
Can have porridge, Mommy.
See – he is ready to eat my porridge
With no complaints.
We will breakfast together,*

*Everyone will eat their own thing.
Vaska licked his lips,
Ate all my porridge,
And lay down on his side –
Sleep, my sweet friend.
You like porridge,
And I like cottage cheese.*

December 13, 2015

Fisherman

*I was sailing in a boat,
Fishing with my Daddy.
We caught so much fish,
But can't carry it all home.
And why did you catch
So much fish with your Daddy?
After all, you can't eat so much,
You can't carry it all home.
Release that fish back in the river,
After all, it will perish without water.
And when you eat everything,
You'll catch more fish,
Not as much as now,
So as not to be wasteful.
Better share with your neighbour,
Everyone loves fresh fish.
He will thank you
For such good fish.
And you won't be wasteful
And will carry the rest home.*

December 2015

Magical Fish

*Did you know, children,
There's a magical fish out there.
This fish is big, it understands everything,
As it blinks its eye.
"I can't speak,
But I love children very much.
I know who fusses about food,
Who doesn't listen to their Mommy,
Runs alone in the street,
Sleeps well at Grandmother's house,
Likes to listen to fairy tales:
About Red Riding Hood,
About a blind musician,
A Russian immigrant,
And many others.
I am not a simple fish –
I am magical.
I love children's songs,
I sing with children."
"No way!
I also want to see
This fish."*

April 4, 2016

Why?

*"Mom, why doesn't the sparrow have a voice?
It never sings,
While the nightingale sings so beautifully
That everyone marvels.
I love listening to the nightingale."
"The sparrow was loud,
All the neighbours got tired of him.
He always raised an alarm,
Woke up animals in their den,
That's why he lost his voice."*

*The nightingale is a smarter bird:
'It's no good to wake up the kids.
I will sing them a song,
Everyone will sleep as in paradise.'
The nightingale has an angelic voice,
He always lulls people to sleep.
The sparrow was punished –
His voice was taken away."
"You will never be able
To sing like a nightingale."*

December 2015

Winter

*Oh winter, winter,
I don't recognize you.
The first snow fell yesterday.
The whole earth is covered in snow.
Such beauty!
And today the snow melted,
Slush, rain and puddles.
It doesn't look like you,
Winter, oh winter.
Sometimes this happens.
And tomorrow snow will come again,
And a troika with bells will rush by,
Winter will come into its rights again.
Grandfather Frost will bring presents to children,
Snow Maiden will sing happily:
Gather, people!
Greet the New Year!
The New Year is so beautiful,
So young - welcome the dear guest!
Old Year, give way to him!
New Year is already at the door,
Brings us joy and happiness.
Hello to you, New Year!
Hello!*

Frost

*There is frost outside.
Bites the ears, bites the nose.
My great-granddaughter's hands are freezing,
Little baby's legs are freezing.
And the frost laughs: ha-ha-ha,
I'm not spring. I'm frost, it's winter now,
Don't expect miracles. Wear warmer clothes,
Move faster in winter.
I am not a mean Grandfather Frost,
Kids wait for me in winter,
I give out presents to everyone.
And to you, little babies,
I will give warm, winter booties.*

December 12, 2015

The Old Bear

(Translation from Yiddish)

*The bear weeps all day:
"Misfortune, misfortune
Happened to me.
I cannot eat nor drink
Nor feast on honey,
All my teeth are hurting."
"Crying won't serve you,
Better go to the doctor."
The bear went to the doctor:
"Doctor, dear, look
and help the bear,
All my teeth are hurting."
"Nothing surprising here.
Your teeth turned black
And got infected,
You should have brushed your teeth.
We'll give you an injection
And your pain will disappear.
Don't forget my advice:*

*If you want to live long,
Eat and drink and feast on
Honey, you should take care
Of your teeth every day.”
“I won’t forget it, doctor, no,
Thank you for your advice.”*

December 4, 2015

Aunt Dusya

*My Granny told me
What happened to Aunty Dusya.
Aunt Dusya wanted
To travel everywhere
So she asks a question
Seriously, jokes aside:
My friends, I want to know
How to become a train driver.
Where and from whom to learn?
I could go anywhere,
Bid farewell to my camel,
And see the whole world.
Hello to you, locomotive, hello!
I love fast driving,
Forgive me, camel,
Our paths diverge, you barely move.
So I became a car driver,
Tourists in Moscow wait for me.
They entrusted me with a train,
To take people all over the country.
Such honour was given to me!
Goodbye, camel, and rest in good health!”
And the camel shakes its head:
“Do not laugh at me.
The places I can go
No locomotive can pass.
I do not complain,
I work as much I can.”*

December 23, 2015

Winter

*I am not afraid of the cold,
Warmly dressed, I won't catch a cold.
Mommy bought me a jacket,
Aunty gave me a hat,
Grandmother knitted a scarf,
Sister sent me felt boots,
Father bought me a sled.
I built a snow maiden,
Attached a broom on the side,
A red nose made from a carrot,
Large black eyes
Made from coal, very funny.
I put a potato in her mouth,
So she can eat something.
I played outside enough, don't want to anymore,
I will say goodbye to the snow maiden
And go home.*

April 5, 2016

Kind Grandfather Frost

*Kind, sweet Grandfather Frost
Brought me presents:
From Mommy and Daddy,
From Grandmother and Grandfather,
From aunt Galya and sister Valya.
Thank you, Grandfather Frost.
Soon I will grow up,
I will help you take presents
To Mommy and Daddy,
To Grandmother and Grandfather,
To aunt Galya and sister Valya,
And one for you, Grandfather Frost,
To thank you for your care.
You are the best Grandfather Frost,
There is no one like you anywhere*

2015-2016

Spring

*Spring is a beautiful season:
Snowdrops woke up,
Raised their heads
And greeted us:
“Good day to you, children,
There’s such beauty in the world!”
All around such tender daffodils,
Colourful tulips already in bloom,
The aroma of lilacs under the window,
Red roses decorated
Our table.
Today is Mommy’s Birthday,
We prepared everything ourselves
And decorated the table with flowers.
We invite you, spring,
Come over, you’ll see your fruit –
Flowers,
And we will celebrate everything together:
The coming of spring and the Birthday
Of my Mommy.*

June 6, 2016

Rain

*Rain, rain, stop pouring,
It’s better to be friends with the sun.
It will dry all the puddles.
Children don’t like rain and cold.
We want to walk in the garden,
To help plant flowers,
To play ball,
To sing and dance.*

*Spring is coming! Spring is coming!
Rain, don't stop us
From walking in the park with Grandmother,
Reading fairy tales with her.
Enough, rain, stop pouring!
It's better to be friends with the sun.*

June 6, 2016

Red Cow

*My Granny had a sweet red cow,
It gave a lot of milk.
Granny milked the cow early,
And gave all grandchildren fresh milk to drink.
She praised the sweet red cow:
My provider – we have
Cheese, butter and sour cream,
All thanks to you.
On summer holidays I looked after the cow with my little
brother,
And in the evening Granny fed us
Pies with cheese
That she made for us.
Thank you, Grandmother, for the pies,
They are tasty.
And thank you, sweet cow,
You are a wonder, sweet cow,
We love you.*

April 12, 2016

Red Rooster

*The red rooster wakes up before everyone
And sings loudly: cock-a-doodle-doo!
Enough of sleeping! Time to get up,
To give food and drink to my hens.
They need to hatch chicks,
Go for walks with them,
Teach them to gather seeds.
My hens are young, not simple but
Educated. They lay eggs in the morning.
“Wake up, children, we prepared
Fresh eggs for you.”
Children love eggs in any form:
Runny, sunny side up, boiled.
“I am the Chicken General,”
Says the red rooster.
“I have an army of hens
Of all breeds: black, red, white.
All of them need to work
And not be lazy. When I call, they must arrive at once.
If they don’t listen, I will punish them,
I will tell the mistress
To boil them for chicken broth.
I teach them order.
I am not joking, I tell you straight: Don’t be lazy,
Give kids fresh eggs every day!
Understood?”
“Ko-ko, ko-ko, all is understood.”*

April 29, 2016

The Cat Murka

*Our cat Murka
Loves to warm herself by the stone oven.
She closes her eyes happily,
Hides her paws under her tummy
And doesn't move
Until my son
Comes back from school.
As soon as he appears
Near the oven,
Murka's eyes light up
Like candles.
Murka is afraid of my son,
He will chase her away from the oven.
It will not do, my son,
To treat Murka badly.
Murka will soon
Give birth to little kittens.
Pity poor Murka,
Let Murka warm her paws
by the stone oven.*

April 28, 2016

Spring

*Spring, how good it is that you came!
It's May again, flowers are blooming,
Sun is shining, children are happy,
They walk in the park, play ball,
Rejoice and sing, and together with us
Celebrate Victory Day.
They congratulate war veterans,
They thank them for happy childhood, for peace on
earth.
For seventy-one years, children sleep peacefully,
Not knowing the terrors of war.
For seventy-one years, – our brothers and fathers no
longer die,
Widows no longer weep, as they lull babies to sleep.
Grandfathers walk with grandchildren,
They don't forget the war,
They remember it often.
"We don't know war",
Our children rejoice.
"Together with you
We celebrate Victory Day.
"Thank you, war veterans!
You fought for peace in the world,
On the whole planet!
We congratulate you, congratulations!
We wish you health and happiness.
We don't forget your great deeds.
Hugs to you,
Your grateful grandchildren
And great-grandchildren."*

May 2, 2016

**I want to conclude with a popular song by
Arkady Ostrovsky, lyrics by Lev Oshanin:**

**Bright blue the sky,
Sun up on high -
That was the little boy's picture.
He drew for you,
Wrote for you, too
Just to make clear what he drew.**

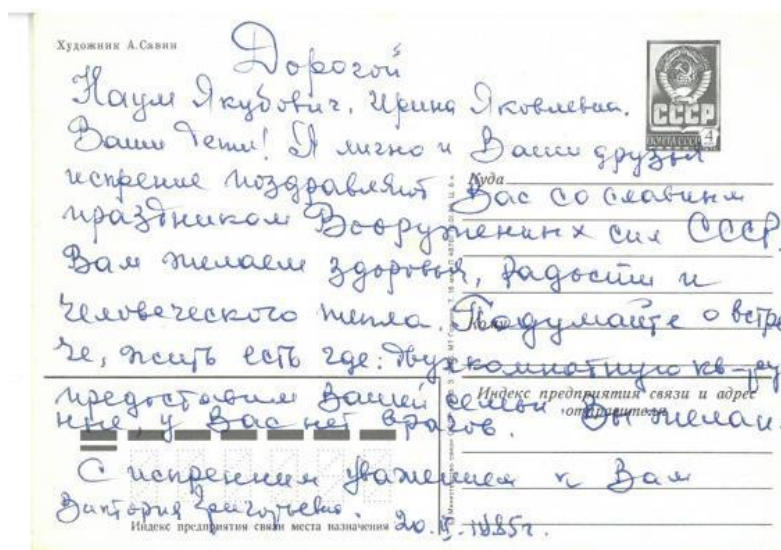
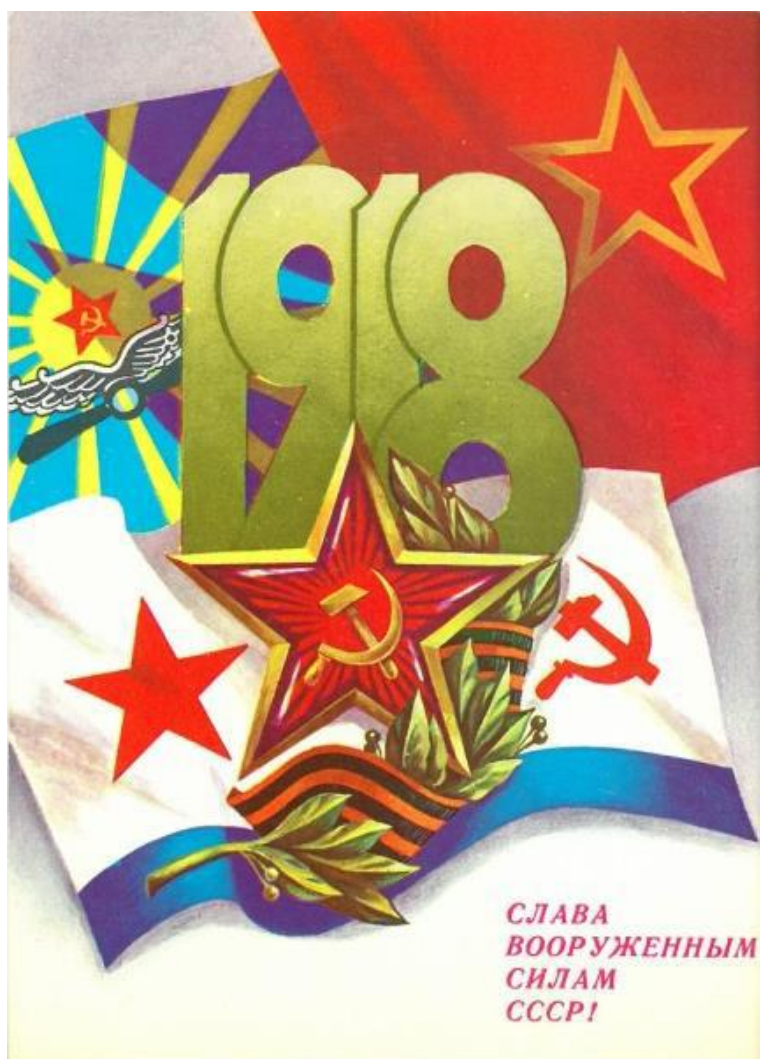
**May there always be sunshine,
May there always be blue skies,
May there always be mommy,
May there always be me!**

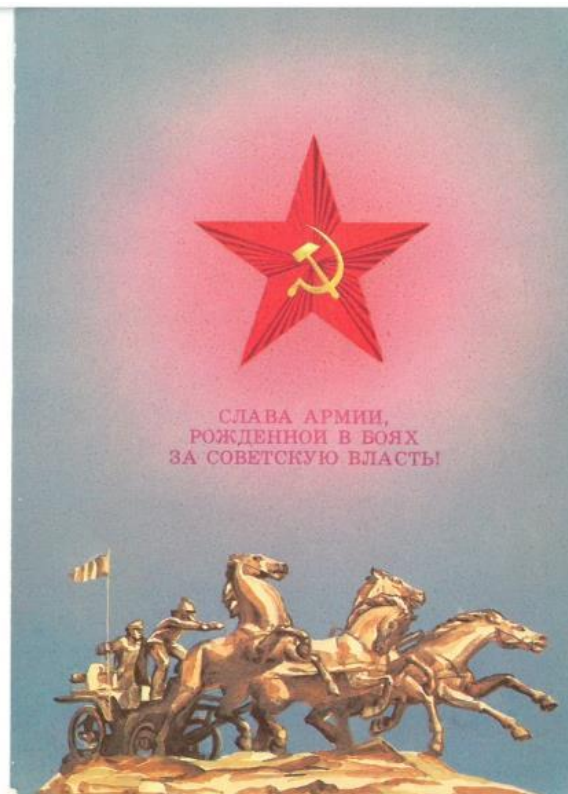
**My little friend,
Listen, my friend,
Peace is the dream of the people.
Hearts old and young
Never have done
Singing the song you have sung.**

**May there always be sunshine,
May there always be blue skies,
May there always be mommy,
May there always be me!]**

**From myself I will add:
Let there always be peace!
Let our grandchildren and
great-grandchildren
Live in peace!**

Letters and Holiday Wishes





Уважаемый
 Жауи Якубович, Ваша
 семья! Здравствуйце!
 искренне поздравляю Вас
 со славным праздником -
 Днем Советской Армии! Желаю
 здоровья и благополучия Вам и
 дочери, пережившей тяжёлую уве-
 ру здоровья. 16 января на акти-
 вации города Вепрейна Веру,
 которой передали Ваш привет и пожел-
 ание. Она выразит свое спасибо
 нованье случившемуся. Когда
 тоже с искренностью и пережива-
 нием выразит сочувствие. Желаю
 Вам полного благополучия и
 выздоровления Ленокки. 2 февраля
 была Вепрейна с освобожденными городами,
 было очень трогательно на вер-
 те с душевным пожеланием косо-
 вания. Доброго Вам здоровья,
пожелания тепла и радости.
 10.11.88г. Викториз Зинуревича



Художник Г. Курченко

Уважаемые
Лазарь Икубович и Ваша семья!

Поздравляем Вас
с наступающим Новым
годом!
Пусть в Новом году не
покинут Вас Ваши мечты,
Много Вам радости и здоровья.
Лично. Семья Смеренко.

5. XII. 74.

Новогодние Вам поздрав-
ления и пожелания от Ваших
друзей.

Индекс предприятия связи места назначения

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ПОЧТА СССР 3 коп.

Куда _____

Кому _____

Индекс предприятия связи и адрес
отправителя



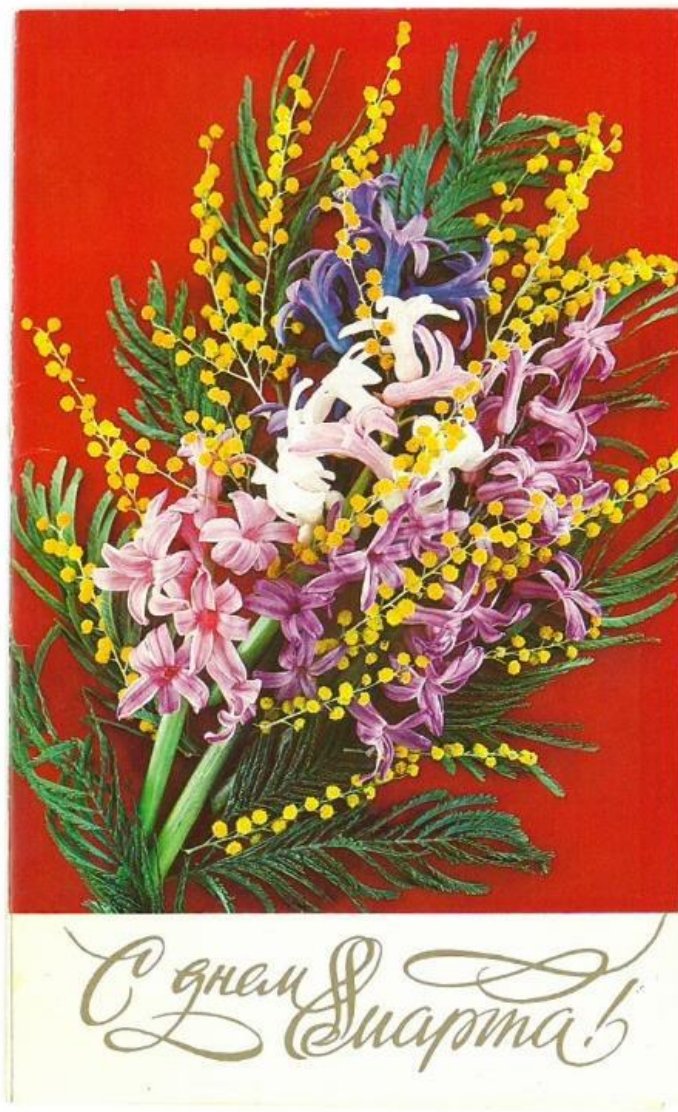
25.12.86г. Здравствуйте, дорогие наши
 Все соберемся на несколько минути
 и вспомним тяжёлые годы. Они были
 и приятными, ^{и печальными} так как это была юность
 надежд, загор, стремление. А сейчас
 уже история, 1987 год на пороге. Пусть
 он Вам принесёт здоровье, радость,
 благополучие. Пусть никакая печаль не тревожит
 души Ваши и ещё мечтаю, чтобы небо
 было ясное, и на Земле росли цветы.
 Неужели никто из Вас не мечтает
 встрече?! Как она заманчива.

Будьте счастливы и здоровы.

© Министерство связи СССР, 1986. З. 131980, ППФ Гознака Т. 9,0 млн. 19.02.86. Цена открытки с маркированным конвертом 8 коп.

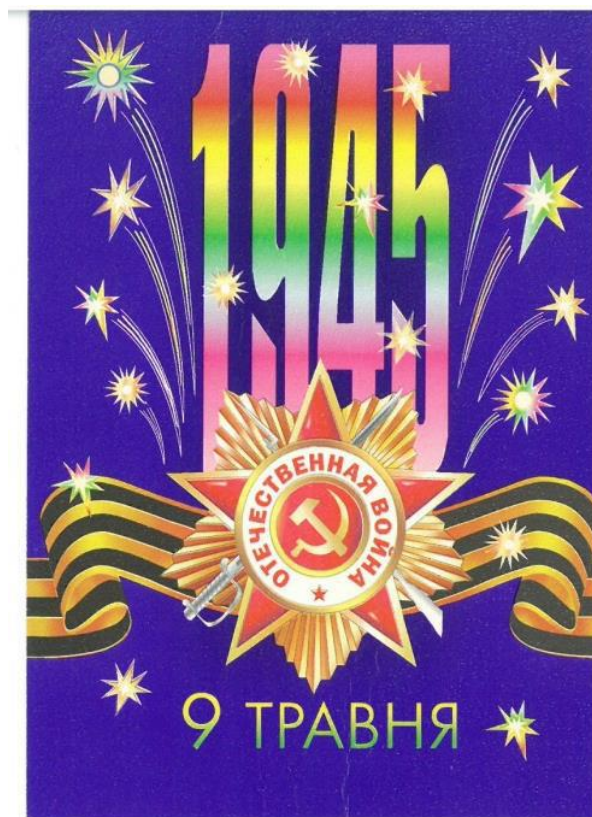
ОТПРАВЛЯТЬ ПО ПОЧТЕ ТОЛЬКО В КОНВЕРТЕ

Виктория Федорова



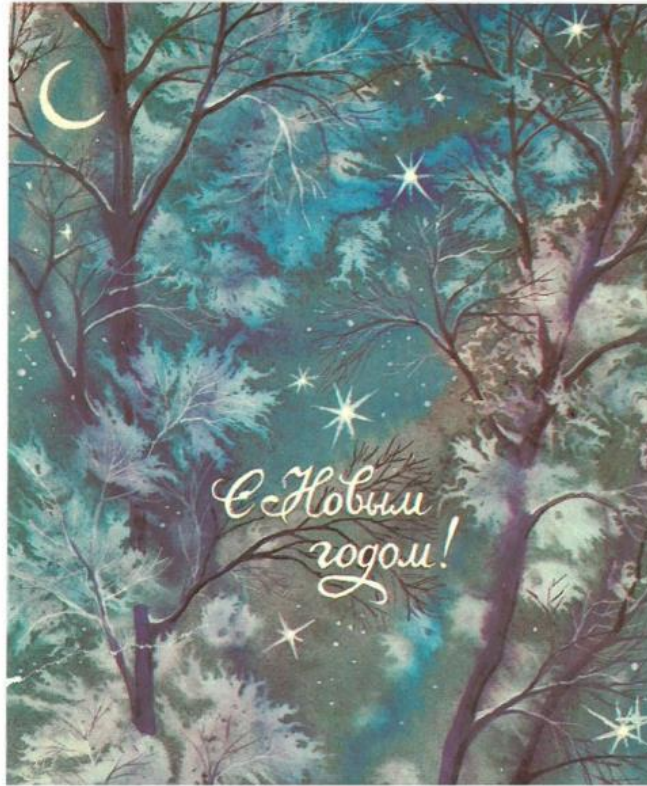
испренне
поздравленіе
матчу с праздничной
С. Морно.

Дусть с Вами мнѣн радость
всѣмъ насиреніе. Передатъ мнѣн цѣсть
не могу, горю жеи кормеж. Я сирас в сои и
ежедневно сирасе с кифайскіи апапей, кот.
Он видѣе на картоне, с кифайскіи апапей, кот.
фракціи, по-тому горю Васе радость
всѣмъ, радость мнѣн
Григоріанскіи.
Витъ-мнѣн Гривъ.

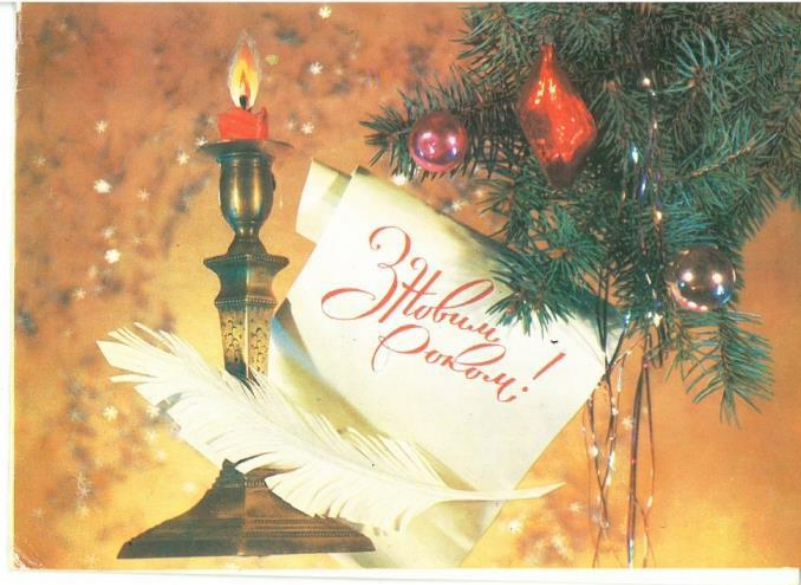


Дорогий Кош!
 Поздравляю тебе з
 днем Перемоги. Це
 наше з тобою свято.
 Щастя тобі і здоров'я.
 А. Гилек *Григор*





Дорогой друг Митя!
 Принимаю твои Брайские
 поздравления с новым 1991 годом
 и наилучшие пожелания
 тебе и твоей семье в
 новых делах и жизни.
 Будь здоров и счастлив
 Обнимаю по Брайски
 твой друг Владимир



Здравствуй,
 дорогой друг мой!
 сердечно поздравляю тебя и семью
 твою наступившим Новым 1981
 годом желаю теплою всем вам
 крепкою здоровьи, бодрости, трудовых
 успехов, вашей семье, радости,
 и долгих лет жизни. твой друг,
 Скрибинский 26/11/1980г. Владимир
 Ричик как всегда

Поздравляю тебя,
 семью, друзей и близких. и
 передаю тебе мои
 привет.

Веночки,
 передай мне

г. Ровно
 ул. 1-я Октябрьская дом 62 К3
 Вондратчук Николай Александрович
 Твоя жена
 Умер Николай Григорий Андреевич.

сам или пожелает что одному
человеку пожелает возросли, тогда эти
дошки Визова может быть Визова
Дорогие мои изобавите Меня
Передан Вам всем Визовым Привет
семь моих друзей Визовых именов
Всем здоровья и радости

19/II 1990 год Визов

Здравствуй, мой Корень

Дорогой Митя и Твоей семье. Прочел
письмо очень приятно что узнаю твою
жизнь семья очень приятно что узнаю
таких друзей мамочку Цейкову сам-то
ты родиши или все еще мамочка.
Митя у нас сейчас совсем, друзья
жизнь раньше у нас было лучше а сейчас
тяжело первое это у нас Чернобыльско
Электростанция которая принадлежит
Украине, а тяжело второе украинцы
корень говоря, тяжело второе другое
получил твой письмо союзниками, оно
направлено тебе найденно в Киев
получил союзниками, у нас очень много
партида у нас умирал Корнеев, Борис
Харьков, Лобачев, Максимов Мария
Погорова Попова Подмошину, Вера Трибани
Котенко Плохо жива. Ты наверно
знаешь что мой сын в США и дочка
мелкий Кайлох я пишу сам Коваль
сам понимаю что совсем тяжело

Уважаемый

Пауль Якубович!

С радостью приняла Ваш
привет и напомню обо мне.
Моя миссия может-то возвраща-
ется из Канады.

Сердечно поздравляю Вас
и Вашу семью с Новым годом.
Пусть Новый год будет светлым,
радостным и принесёт Вам
здоровье и благополучие.

Ждем Вас в отпуске.
Можете приезжать одни,
можете — с семьей. Кварти-
ра-комната для Вас есть
на 2-3 человека.

200014 Адрес:
Ровно-14, ул. Кузнецова, 29, кв. 26.
Старовойт Виктория Григорьевна

Я пыталась Вас вызвать.
Мне ответили в бюро виз и
пропусков, что бы Вы сде-

или визов через посольство СШ.
за, которое в Канаде.

Асгейн Заб.

Самые наилучшие по-
мощи Вам, супруге и дево-
чке.

С уважением

Виктория Григорьевна,
Вера Грибанова.

11 января 1988 года

Привет с г. Луцка!

Дорогой Наум Яковлевич, Большое тебя наше украинское спасибо за твоих два письма, а ищю большое спасибо з фотокарточку на которой ты снят своими внучатами. Мы с Улианой считаем твою доч большим героем за то, что она народила таких прекрасных близнипов.

Мы с Улианой живём в двойом, имеем квартиру двухкомнатною на втором этаже, получаем пенсию - я 156 рублей, а Улиана 60 рублей и так по стариковски живём.

Ты знаеш что унас есть три дочери, две проживает у Львове, а одна в Луцку, имеем 6 внучат, это 4 девочки и два мальчика, старшей дочери которая проживает у Львове, старша доч вышла замож, а этой дочери которая живёт в Луцке то старший син уже служить в морфлоти на севере, в этом году уже прийдёт дамой после трехгодишной морской службе.

Относительно того чтобы поехать к тебя в Канаду в гости то я и Улиана неможим поехать, плохое состояние здоровья не позволяет далеко ехать.

Мои дочери они согласные поехать любая с них, вот их адреса:
УССР г. Луцк ул. Шусева 2 кв. 15 Котенко Светлана Александровна.
г. Львов - 35 ул. Билоцерковская 2 А кв. 161, индекс 290035 Филук Людмила Александровна.

г. Львов - 10 ул. Пискова 9 кв. 4 Соха Галина Александровна.

Унас за городом есть дача 006 сотих огорода, там мы построили домик, построили теплицу 10 на 4 метра с водяным отоплением, сичас там растим лук, редиску, уже посеяли помидори, ежедневно ходим на эту дачу, там всегда есть работа и свежи воздух, там на даче есть и дають плоды 5 яблонь, одна груша, один волоський орех и одна вишня, немного смородины и клубники.

В декабре месяце 1989 года дзвонил мне по телефону с израиля мой партизан Розенблат / Гриша /, а на второй день знову дзвонил другой мой партизан с Западной Германии Йосько Глуз, он оженился на немки, а родственники ево жены отдали всё своё состояние и он там живёт харашо.

Они оба собираются на май месяц 1990 года приехать ко мне в Луцк в гости, я уже делаю для них приглашения.

Относительно нашего здоровья моего и Улиане то здоровье неважное, часто болеем. Мне 6 декабря 1989 года минуло первых 75 лет, пошов 76 год моей трудовой жизни, но хачу тебя сказать, что до 76 года я незнал как болят зубы, а сичас на протяжении два месяца уже два зуба удалил и ищю буду удалять.

И ишо ходжу в хор Ветеранов войны и спиваю, наш хор состоит с 60 человек самых бывших военнов и старих членов партии, мы даём концерты по школам, колхозам, институтам, заводам и военным гарнизонам.

26 января 1990 года давали концерт полякам которые приехали к нам в г. Луцк с гг. Хелма, Замосця и Билгорая, спивали мы им песни военного периода и две песни польских на польском языке, это - Марш гвардии лодовой - и одну народную- Гей там загуром-.

Ты мне написав, что я вислав фотокарточку и неподписав и ты незнаеш кому она пренадлежить, то я высилаю втарую с моим автографом где первая и этая втарая пренадлежить тебя и твоей прикрасней семе.

Ты спрашуеш меня за тов. Бондарчука из г. Ровно, то он перенёс летом инфарт а сичас очень болеет на сердце, я сним разгавариваю по телефону.

Дорогой Наум Яковлевич! мы приближаемся до мижнародного праздника всех женщин мыра 8 марта, примите от нас шире сердечное поздравление и харошее пожелание твоей сопруги и твоим героям дочерам пусть вхарошом здорови и щастии проживають и дитей хароших рожают.

А тебя поздравляю наступающим днём ПОБЕДЫ, где будем отмичать 45 летия ПОБЕДЫ над фашизмом, желаем тебе харошего здоровя много лет жизни на благо своих дитей, внуков и всего харошего человечества.

Д О С В И Д А Н И Е Ваши незабываемия друзья
Филик Александр Федорович и Улияна Алексеевна.

УССР г. Луцк ул. Гордишук 45 кв. 7 индекс 263023.

С. С. С. С.

С чувством глыбокого уважения
Поздравляем с 45 летием ПОБЕДЫ,
желаем всем Вам харошего здоровя.

Вы столько накопили уваженья
Другим хватило бы на тыщу лет
И это лучшее на свете сбережение-
Которому цены, конечно- нет.
Всегда Вас будет помнить край Волинский-
Где много солнца и полны столи-
Привет примите ширий- Украинский-
И щоб Ви здоровенькими були!!!

*Автор стихотворения
Григорий А. Ф.*

пожовтіло листя
падає на землю,
у Волинських лісах
Кругом тишина,
пригадують друзі
друзі партизани
партизанські роки
як була війна.

Вже давно минули
ці буремні роки,
у Волинських лісах
мир і тишина,
тепер обнімаються
друзі - друзі партизан
партизанська дружба
вірна і міцна.

Шли ми врозв'ітку
темними ночами,
листя шелестіло
вітер гомонів,
смерть дивилась в очі
нам на кожному кроці,
але ми йшли сміло
бити ворогів.

Он там біля дуба
похоронив друга,
а втім болоті
очирет шумів,
там вмирала мати
сина партизана,
партизанська мати
всіх полішуків.

Доручу тобі вірша мого сочинення,
про те, що того не помічав, бо знав,
що я користуюся тими відносинами
літвих очей, а справдою всім не
несу, з серця 1989 г. зробили
мені опрацювання і виконали
небачу.

Здравствуй дорогой Павел Иванович!
Прежде всего извини, что не
написал тебе раньше. Дело в
том, что я поранил себе глаз,
долго лежал в больнице, делали
операцию. Сейчас тебе пишет
моя дочь Марина.

Очень рад, что ты прочел
мою книгу. Я действительно
использовал твой эпизод из "Цены
дружбы", но, к сожалению, не
мог вписать своего персонажа
так как тебя не было в
Советском Союзе. Время было
такое, сам понимаешь.

В моей книге за этот
период есть прибавление.

У Марины родился дочка.

Так что теперь у меня
четыре внука и два внучка.

В 75 лет это не плохо. Можно
быть скоро доктором и правником.

Здравствуй дорогой Наум Иконевич!

Благодарю тебя за письмо, которое с радостью прочел и через столько лет смог узнать кое-что о тебе и твоей семье. Извини, что немного задержался с ответом.

Несмотря на то, что я уже 8 лет на пенсии, свободного времени не так уж много. Занимаюсь общественной деятельностью. Часто бываю в школах, институтах и других организациях, где выступаю перед молодежью. Очень часто встречаюсь с польскими друзьями, бывшими партизанами. Я тебе уже писал, что пою в хоре ветеранов войны и труда, который называется "Подвиг". Репетиции и выступления по области и другим городам Украины забирают много времени и не дают засиживаться дома. В конце мая будем давать концерты в Польше, в городах Хелм и Замость. Такая вот у меня общественная жизнь. А дома тоже есть много забот. Сейчас на своей даче хотим построить теплицу для выращивания ранних овощей. Так что строительных проблем тоже много. Ульяна Алексеевна ^{занята} трехлетней внучкой Светочкой, дочкой Людмилы, которая живет во Львове. Светочка скучать нам не дает. Вот так и живем. Но годы дают себя знать. В отношении здоровья, то я еще держусь, но очень болят ноги. Ульяна страдает радикулитом. Очень скоро стали мы стареть. Мне уже исполнилось 74 года, Ульяне в июне будет 66 лет. Оба мы инвалиды Великой Отечественной войны второй группы. У меня пенсия 140 рублей, у Ульяны - 60. Пользуюсь предоставленными льготами как инвалид войны, то есть, один раз в год бесплатная путевка в санаторий, бесплатный проезд в транспорте, за квартиру и другие коммунальные услуги платим 50%. Так государство у нас заботится об инвалидах войны. Высылаю тебе нашу фотографию.

-2-

Большое спасибо за приглашение приехать к вам. Но боюсь, что мы уже не в том возрасте, когда можно легко переносить такое длительное путешествие. Разве что кто-то из дочерей мог бы приехать. Мы тоже хотели бы увидеть вас. Так что, если вы можете приехать к нам в гости, то напишите, пожалуйста, все свои данные необходимые для приглашения. Передай привет жене и детям. Обнимаю вас всех.

ДО СВИДАНИЯ.

P.S. Попробую выслать тебе свою книгу. Если удастся, то получите ее вместе с письмом.

Здравствуйте дорогие Нины.
Снова пишу вам я, Люда.
Давно с вами не общалась, много
изменилось. Написку всё по-прежнему.
Начну с того, что родителями
переехали жить из Мухоморова
в Мовов. Прошлое году. Отец болел,
мало ходил, и мы было хотели пере-
ехать в Мухоморов. Переехали в Мовов
в отдельную квартиру, но недалеко
от меня. В Мовове живут ещё
и старшая сестра Тоня, так, что мы
обе присматривали за родителями.
В ноябре 2001 года отцу стало хуже,
он с трудом передвигался, ноги пока-
ливались, была аритмия, а потом
несколько серьёзных приступов в те-
чение двух дней и 22 ноября 2001 года
отец не стал. Врачи определили острую
сердечную недостаточность. Похоронили
его здесь, в Мовове. Мамочка теперь
почти всё время живёт со мной,
иногда ездит на свою квартиру, но
в основном у меня. Она переживает
переход смерти отца как и мы все.

Вот только сейчас, спустя четыре
месяца после смерти отца, маме согла-
силась, чтобы её маленького паралика
у неё огромные проблемы со спиной,
искривлен позвоночник, ну а отсюда и
все головные боли и т. п. У нас трудно
найти хорошего врача, который будет
добросовестно лечить маленького человека
(к сожалению, конечно). Но мы такого маме
и не думали, что он поможет маме.
Вот такие у нас сейчас проблемы.
Я хотела вам позвонить, но после перемены
родителей, я не смогла найти вам но-
мер телефона. Мы теперь как то живем
в Каледону так, как там в Квебеке,
сейчас у меня моя дочь, Светочка, ей
16 лет, она уехала на один учебный
год по учебно-исследовательскому обмену в Квебек (Канада).
А у нас живет маленький из Квебека, тоже
участник в школе здесь, будет до конца учеб-
ного года. Светочка тоже с вами познакомилась,
она много слышала о вас от
дедушки.

Мы будем очень рады услышать вас,
сообщите свой номер телефона или позво-
ните нам: 07138 0322 45 43 49

Обнимаю и целую вас.
Саша Филоков.

P.S. In the book I included some letters and holiday wishes that we received from former partisans when we were already in Canada. Partisan friendship lasted till the end. These heroes are no more, only the memory of them stayed, and letters and photographs, which I often look at, and I decided to share with you this treasure. There are some memories connected to the war but not the partisans. Those memories are also dear to me.

Grunia Slutzky-Kohn

From: Olga Bodack (olgabodack@gmail.com)

To: grunia11@yahoo.ca;

Date: Tuesday, June 21, 2016 8:20 PM

EL DIRECTEUR DE ESTE FILM MERECE UN OSCAR

THE DIRECTOR OF THIS FILM DESERVES AN OSCAR

We congratulate from Argentina

Monday, April-25-16

Boris Sidnev

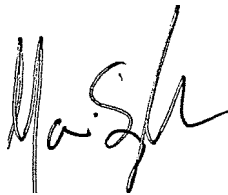
**RE: DOCUMENTARY ON THE LIFE OF NUCHEM KOHN
"Связной Кузнецова"**

Dear Mr. Sidnev,

I wish to express the thanks and gratitude of the Jewish Community for producing the documentary entitled "СВЯЗНОЙ КУЗНЕЦОВА". Your work is a true testament to a Jewish Russian Hero, Nuchem Kohn, for his bravery and heroics during the Second World War.

Thank you for taking the time to tell the story of Mr. Kohn. Your work will ensure that his memory will not be forgotten.

On behalf of the Jewish Community, I thank you for your passion to bring this documentary to life.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yai Szlak', with a stylized, cursive script.

Warm Regards,

**Yai Szlak,
Chief Development Officer
Federation CJA**

My dear friend Metek!

Dear Kohn!

Dear Naum Yakubovich, Irina Yakovlevna, your children!

Your friends, and I personally, send our sincere congratulations on this glorious holiday of the Armed Forces of the USSR. We wish you health, happiness and warmth. Think about a meeting, there's a place to stay: we will provide a two-room apartment for your family. You are wanted, you have no enemies.

With sincere respect,

Viktoria Grigoryevna

February 20, 1985

Dear Naum and your family! Greetings!

My sincere congratulations to you on this glorious holiday – the Day of the Soviet Army! Wishing health and well-being to you and your daughter, who has lived through a difficult period of ill health. On January 26, at the city women's meeting, I saw Vera who sends you greetings and congratulations. She expresses her sympathy about what happened. Kolya also expresses his sympathy with sincerity and concern. We wish you total well-being and Lenochnka's recovery. On February 2, we had a meeting with the liberators of the city. The meeting was very touching, with heartfelt reverence for the liberators. Wishing you good health, warmth and joy. Victoria Grigoryevna

10. 02. 88

Dear Naum Yakubovich and your family!

**Our best wishes for the coming New Year!
Let your wishes come true in the New Year!
Wishing you much joy and health.
Write to us.
The Starov Family
December 5, 1977**

**New Year's congratulations and wishes from your
friends.**

December 25, 1986

Hello, dear ones.

**Everyone gathered for a few minutes to remember the
difficult years. They were pleasant as well, and sad, because of
youth, ardor, striving. And now it's already history, the year
1987 is at the door. May it bring you health, joy, well-being.
Let no sadness threaten your souls. And we also wish for the
sky to be clear and for flowers to bloom on Earth. Does no one
among you wish for a meeting?! It is so desirable.**

Be happy and healthy,

Victoria Grigor.

**We sincerely wish the girls and their mom a happy
holiday of March 8.**

**Let joy and springtime mood be with you. I cannot
give you real flowers, so I give you a card. I am in Sochi right
now and every day I see the Chinese acacia, which you see on
the card, with daffodils and Caucasian violets, so I offer you
the joy of spring, the joy of our Motherland.**

Come visit. Victoria Grigorievna

**Dear Kohn,
We wish you a happy Victory Day. This holiday is
yours and mine. Happiness and health to you.**

A. Filyuk

**Dear friend Metek!
Accept my brotherly congratulations on a happy new
year, 1991, and best wishes to you and your family in your
pursuits and life. Be healthy and happy.
I hug you as a brother,
Your friend
Bondarchuk**

**Hello dear friend Metek,
I wish you and your family a happy new year, 1981, from my
heart. I sincerely wish good health to you all, major career
successes to your family, joy and long years of life. Your
friend, with greetings, December 26, 1980. Write how you live.
Sasha Dudochkin and Meiler congratulate you and send you a
big greeting.
Bondarchuk Nikolai Aleksandrovich
62, September 17th street, Apt 3, Rovno Write, don't
forget us,
Kleshkan Grigory Andreevich died.
Lenochka, give this to your dad**

**Hello,
My darlings!**

**Dear Metek and your family. I read your letter; it's
so nice that you have such a good family, it's so nice
that you have two boys. I myself feel that you are
happy with them, I mean with the boys. Metek, our
life is completely different now. It was better before,
but now it is difficult. First, there is the Chernobyl
Electric Station, which brought us poison, and things**

got difficult with food. To put it shortly, it got difficult to find it. I received your letter late, it was directed, I mean sent to Klevan, I received with a delay. Here many of our partisans are already dead. Korneev, Borisov, Perehodko, Lobachev, Talanov. Maria got hit by a car, Vera Gribanova is doing badly. Perhaps you know that my son Lesha and my daughter are doing well. As for me, I live in a new apartment. You understand that it is hard to be on your own. You can understand that for a person of my age, I am waiting for an invitation from my daughter, maybe we will meet again.

My dears, don't forget me. I send you all a big hello, the family of my comrade-in-arms. Wishing health and joy to all, December 19, 1990,

Bondarchuk

Dear Naum Yakubovich!

I accepted your greeting and your memory of me with joy. For some reason my letters kept coming back from Canada.

I congratulate you and your family with all my heart. Let the New Year be bright, happy and bring you health and well-being. We wait for you to come here on vacation. You can come alone, or with family. An apartment – a room is here for you, for two-to-three people.

Address:

**Starovoyt Viktoria Grigoryevna
19 Kuznetsova St, apt. 26.
Rovno-14, 266010**

I tried to get you an invitation. At the bureau of visas and permits they answered me that you need to get a visa through the Consulate of the Soviet Union, which is in Canada.

We are waiting for you.

Best wishes to you, your spouse and the girls.

With respect,

Victoria Grigoryevna,

Vera Griбанova.

January 11, 1988

Greetings from Lutsk!

Dear Naum Yakovlevich, a big Ukrainian thank you from us for your two letters, and also a big thank you for the photograph on which you are captured with your little grandkids. Ulyana and I consider your daughter a great hero for giving birth to such beautiful twins.

Ulyana and I live together, we have a two-room apartment on the second floor, we receive a pension – I get 156 roubles, Ulyana 60 roubles, and so we live as old people.

You know that we have three daughters, one resides in Lvov, one in Lutsk, we have six grandchildren, it's four girls and two boys, the eldest daughter lives in Lvov. The eldest daughter got married, and as for the daughter that lives in Lutsk, her eldest son already serves in the Marine Corps up North, and this year he will already come home after a three-year service at sea.

Concerning the possibility of coming to visit you in Canada, Ulyana and I cannot go, bad health prevents us from travelling far.

Our daughters, they agree to come visit, either of them, here are their addresses:

Kotenko Svetlana Aleksandrovna, 2 Schuseva St., Apt 15, Lutsk, USSR. Filyuk Lyudmila Aleksandrovna, 2A Bilotserkovsky St, Apt. 161, Lvov-35, postcode 290035.

We have a dacha outside the city, six square meters of a vegetable plot. We built a little house there, made a greenhouse, 10x4m with water heating. Now we grow onions, radishes there, already planted tomatoes. We go to this dacha daily, there is always work and fresh air. There at the dacha there are five apple trees, one pear tree, one walnut tree and one cherry tree, a little bit of currants and strawberries, growing and bearing fruit.

In December 1989, my partisan Rosenblatt (Grisha) called me on the phone from Israel, and on the second day, again, my other partisan, Iosko Gluz, called from Western Germany. He married a German woman, and the relatives of his wife gave them all of their assets and now he lives well there.

Both of them are preparing to come visit me in Lutsk in the month of May of 1990, I am already getting invitations for them.

Concerning my and Ulyana's health, our health is not that good, we are often ill. On December 6, 1989, I crossed my first 75-year mark, the 76th year of my working life began, but I want to tell you, that before I turned seventy-six, I did not know how much teeth can hurt, and now in two months I already got two teeth removed and will be removing some more.

I also go to the choir of war veterans and sing. Our choir consists of sixty people, most of them former warriors and old party members. We give concerts at schools, collective farms, colleges, factories and war garrisons.

On January 26, 1990, we gave a concert to some Poles who came to visit us in Lutsk from the cities of Chelm, Zamosc and Bilgoraj, we sang them songs of the war years and two Polish songs in Polish: March of the People's Army and one folk song, "There Beyond the Mountain."

You wrote to me that I sent you a photo and didn't sign it, and you don't know who it belongs to, so I am sending a second one, with my autograph, where the first one and this second one belong to you and your beautiful family.

You ask me about Comrade Bondarchuk from Rovno, well he survived a heart attack in the summer, and now he has much trouble with his heart, and I talk to him on the phone.

Dear Naum Yakovlevich! The international holiday of all women of the world, March 8, is coming up. Accept from us heartfelt congratulations and good wishes for your spouse and your heroic daughters, let them live in good health and happiness and give birth to good children.

And to you I send congratulations with the upcoming VICTORY day, when we will celebrate the 45 years of VICTORY over fascism, wishing you good health, many years of life for the benefit of your children, grandchildren and all humankind.

GOODBYE

Your unforgotten friends

**Filyuk Aleksandr Fedorovich and Ulyana Alekseevna.
45 Gordiyuk St, Apt.7, Lutsk, USSR, postcode 263023**

**With a feeling of deep respect
We congratulate you on the 45th anniversary of
VICTORY,
We wish all of you good health.**

**You stored up so much respect,
Others could live on it for a thousand years
And it's the best kind of investment in the world,
Which, of course, has no price.**

**The Volyn land will always remember you,
Where there is so much sun and tables are full –
Accept our wide Ukrainian greeting –
And be healthy!**

Author of the poem A. F. Filyuk

Dear Naum Yakovlevich!

First of all, forgive me that I haven't written to you earlier. The thing is that I hurt my eye, stayed in the hospital for a long time, had an operation. Now my daughter Lyudmila is writing to you.

I am very happy that you read my book. I really did use your episode from "The Price of Weapons", but unfortunately, I couldn't write your last name because you were not in the Soviet Union. Such were the times, you understand. During this time, there's been an addition to my family. Lyudmila had a daughter. So now I have four granddaughters and two grandsons. At 75 it's not that bad. Maybe I will soon have great-grandchildren, too.

And what's new with you? How is your family and children? I congratulate you and your family from my heart with the new year, 1990. I wish you all strong health, happiness and joy. Let the new year bring us a visit.

Goodbye.

**With big heartfelt partisan greetings,
Filyuk**

Hello, Dear Naum Yakovlevich!

I thank you for your letter, which I read with joy and after so many years could learn something about you and your family.

Sorry that I got delayed a bit with an answer.

Despite the fact that I have been retired for 8 years, there is not that much free time. I occupy myself with community involvement. I often go to schools, colleges and other organizations, where I perform in front of the youth. Very often I meet Polish friends, former partisans. I already wrote to you that I sing in the choir with veterans of war and labour, which is called "Heroic Deed." Rehearsals and performances around the oblast and in other cities of Ukraine take up much time and don't let me sit at home. In the end of May, we will give concerts in Poland, in the cities of Chelm and Zamosc. This is what my community life is like. And at home there are also many concerns. Now on my dacha we want to build a greenhouse to grow different vegetables, so there are also many construction problems. Ulyana Alekseyevna is occupied with the three-year-old granddaughter Svetochka, daughter of Lyudmila who lives in Lvov. Svetochka does not let us get bored. This is how we live. But age does make itself known. Concerning health, I still hold myself together, but my legs hurt a lot. Ulyana suffers from radiculitis. We started getting old very quickly. I already turned 74, Ulyana will be 66 in July. We are both invalids of the Great Patriotic War of the second degree. My pension is 140 roubles, Ulyana's – 60. I use the privileges I get as an invalid of war, which means a free trip to a sanatorium once a year, free use of public transport, and we pay only fifty percent for the apartment and other utilities. This is how our state takes care of war invalids. I send you our photograph. Thank you so much for the invitation to visit you. But I am afraid that we are no longer of the age when you can easily manage such a long trip. Perhaps one of our daughters could come. We would also like to see you. So if you can come visit us, please write all the information needed for the invitation. Give my greetings to the wife and children. I hug you all.

GOODBYE.

P.S. I will try to send you my book. If it works out, you will receive it together with the letter.

Hello dear Kohns,

It's me, Lyuda, writing to you again. We haven't communicated in a long while, much has changed. I will write everything in order. I will begin with the fact that my parents moved from Lutsk to Lvov last year. Father was sick, walked with difficulty, it was very hard for them to live in Lutsk. They moved to Lvov to a separate apartment, but not far from me. My older sister Galya also lives in Lvov, so both of us were looking after our parents. In November 2001, father got worse, he had trouble getting up, his legs were giving in/up, he had arrhythmia, and then several heart attacks over the course of two days, and on November 22, 2001, father passed away. Doctors determined an acute heart failure. He was buried here, in Lvov. Mom now lives with me almost all the time, never goes to her apartment, but mostly stays with me. She took father's death very hard, like all of us.

It's only now, four months after father's death, that mom agreed to let us get her some help. She has huge problems with her back, her spine is twisted, and that causes headaches and so on. Here it's hard to find a good doctor that will honestly treat an aged person (of course, this is unfortunate). But we found one like that, and I think he will help mom. These are our problems right now. I wanted to call you, but after my parents' move I could not find your phone number. We often call Canada now, because my daughter Svetochka is studying there now, in Quebec, she is sixteen, she left for one schoolyear on school exchange to Quebec. And right now we have a boy from Quebec living with us, who also studies at school here, he will be here till the end of the schoolyear. Svetochka wants to meet you, she heard much about you from grandfather.

We will be very happy to hear from you. Tell us your phone number or call us: 07138 03220 75 73 49

We hug and kiss you. The Filyuk family